This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

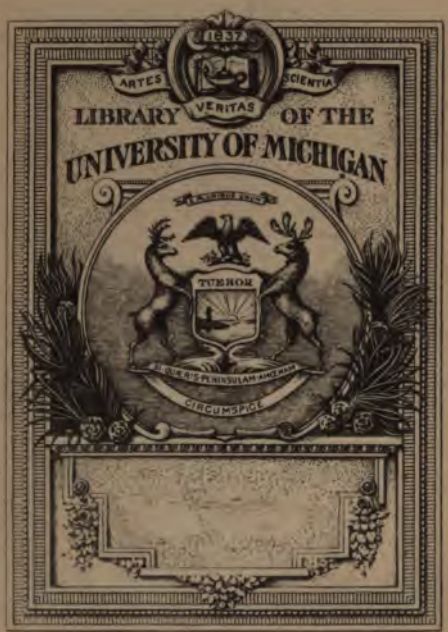
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

PR
3380
.A5
S7
1836
v.7

UNIV. OF MICH.

COWPER'S FAVORITE SEAT AT EARTHAM,

LOOKING TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

With Portraits of Hayley by Haines, Young Hayley by [illegible]
Charlotte Smith by Opie, Dr. J. Johnson and Cowper by Abbott
Nelson by [illegible] and Hurdis by —

[illegible] PUBLISHED BY HARDING & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW, [illegible]

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ. L.L.D.

VOL. VII.

EAST GRINSTEAD.

LONDON.
BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1835.

UNIV. OF MICH.

THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

COMPRISING

HIS POEMS,

CORRESPONDENCE, AND TRANSLATIONS.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE EDITOR,

ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. LL. D.

POET LAUREATE, ETC.

VOL. VII.

LONDON:
BALDWIN AND CRADOCK,
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1836.

CHISWICK PRESS:
C. WHITTINGHAM, COLLEGE HOUSE.

Grad. of English Galloway 3-28-28 16800

CONTENTS.

VOL. VII.

1791.

Page

To John Johnson, Esq. Feb. 27. Thanks for subscriptions from Cambridge 1

To Mrs. King. March 2. Excuses. Homer. Cambridge subscription owing to his cousin Johnson 2

To Joseph Hill, Esq. March 6. Homer soon to be published 4

To the Rev. James Hurdis. March 6. Praising his Village Curate. Declining an invitation, and giving one . . 5

To Joseph Hill, Esq. March 10. French and English prints on the same subject from the Iliad, exemplifying the difference between his translation and Pope's . . 6

To Clotworthy Rowley, Esq. March 14. Mondays devoted to his correspondents. Mr. Rowley engaged in a contested election 7

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. March 18. Dr. Johnson's taste for poetry. An expression of religious hope . . 9

To John Johnson, Esq. March 19. Elizabeth Bentley. Uneducated poets. Mrs. Leapor 11

To Samuel Rose, Esq. March 24. Glad that Rose has to plead business as his apology for silence 12

To Lady Hesketh. March 25. Horace Walpole. Alarm

Page

from a drunken party in the night. Remarks on a religious book 13

To Mrs. Throckmorton. April 1. Epigram on the ill success of his subscription at Oxford. Mr. Throckmorton's pamphlet 15

To John Johnson, Esq. April 6. Cambridge. Pressing him not to delay his visit 17

To Samuel Rose, Esq. April 29. Oxford. Slow progress of the printers 18

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. May 2. A Monday letter. Cowper a physiognomist, but not by rule. Milton's Latin poems 18

To the Rev. Mr. Buchanan. May 11. Promising to undertake a poem on the Four Ages, upon Mr. Buchanan's suggestion and design 20

To Lady Hesketh. May 18. Cowper's apparent preference of his first volume to his second 21

To John Johnson, Esq. May 23. Reasons for having kept secret his translation of the Battle of the Frogs and Mice. A cold May 22

To Mrs. King. May 26. Uneasy at her long silence. His release from the press at hand. Her promised visit not prudently to be delayed 23

To Lady Hesketh. May 27. No just reason why the printer should be hanged for his delay. Cowper a contented subject, who did not choose to be made otherwise by reading the Rights of Man 25

To John Johnson, Esq. June 1. 26

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. June 13. Homer to be published at the worst season. Fondness for animals. Dancing days 27

To Samuel Rose, Esq. June 15. Consoling him for some ungrateful treatment. Mrs. Balls. Johnson and his sister at Weston 29

Page

To Dr. James Cogswell. June 15. Thanks for a present of books from New York, others sent in acknowledgement 30

To Lady Hesketh. June 23. Account of his guests from Norfolk, and their intention of taking a house near him. The Four Ages 33

To the same. June 26. Money-matters. Mr. Johnson. Improvements at Weston. Instance of his own skill in physiognomy 35

To the same. June 28. Anxiety concerning Mrs. Unwin's health. Mr. and Mrs. Bodham expected . . . 38

To Mrs. Bodham. July 7. A letter forgotten. Apologies needless. Her goodness in consenting to the proposed settlement of her nephew at Weston 40

To Lady Hesketh. July 11. Bargain with Mr. Johnson for his Homer. French politics. His cousin's intention of settling at Weston frustrated 42

To the Rev. William Bull. July 27. Birmingham riots. A wager to be determined in the next world 45

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Aug. 2. Visit from Lady Bagot 46

To Mrs. King. Aug. 4. Cowper of a house more than commonly subject to melancholy. Invitation repeated . 48

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Aug. 9. His study exposed to visitors. A subject for a poem properly rejected. Thanks for comparing his translation with Pope's, and with the original 49

To John Johnson, Esq. Aug. 9. Good reports of his translation. Other work proposed to him 52

To Lady Hesketh. Aug. 30. Arrangements for her coming. Success of his Homer. Correspondence concerning it with Thurlow 52

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Sept. 14. Expected revisal of Homer. Engaged to edite Milton 55

Page

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Sept. 21. Homer. Question concerning an allusion in one of Milton's Latin Poems 56

To Mrs. King. Oct. 21. Women better than men in all the most important points 58

To Clotworthy Rowley, Esq. Oct. 22. Reproach for not visiting him. Mention of an old friend. Milton . . 60

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Oct. 25. Pleasures received from his visit. Poem by Lord Bagot 62

To John Johnson, Esq. Oct. 31. Miscellaneous . . . 63

To Joseph Hill, Esq. Nov. 14. Compound epithets. Translation of Milton's Latin poem 65

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Dec. 5. Remarks on Homer considered 66

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Dec. 10. His task with Milton an agreeable one. Offer of Hurdis to be his advocate with the public 68

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Dec. 21. Putting off his visit on account of Mrs. Unwin's paralytic seizure 69

1792.

To the Rev. John Newton. Jan. 1. Mrs. Unwin's illness 70

To Mrs. King. Jan. 26. On the same subject. A suffering courage more meritorious than an active one . 72

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Feb. 14. A line in Homer accidentally omitted. Limits of a Commentator's province. Correspondence with Thurlow 73

To Lord Thurlow. ——. Wondering at his preference of rhyme, and replying to some strictures on the Homer 75

Lord Thurlow to William Cowper, Esq. ——. On the principle of translation 76

To Lord Thurlow. ——. In reply 80

From Lord Thurlow to William Cowper, Esq. ——. Acknowledging that Homer may be better translated in blank verse than in rhyme 82

Page
To Lord Thurlow. ——. Closing the correspondence . 83
To the Rev. John Newton. Feb. 20. Amended copy of his lines for Miss Patty More's album. Speculations on the settlements at Botany Bay and Sierra Leone . 84
To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Feb. 21. Thanks for his strictures on the Homer. Plan of the commentary on Milton not yet settled 86
To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. March 2. Strictures alluded to. Proposed dedication of Hurdis's Sir Thomas More accepted. The Throckmortons about to remove from Weston 87
To the Rev. John Newton. March 4. Altered copy of the album verses. Mr. Courtenay, Sir John Throckmorton's brother, about to reside at the Hall. Reflections on the changes of life 89
To Mrs. King. March 8. Her imprudence blamed, in going to church on Christmas Day, before she was well recovered from a sharp fit of rheumatism. Verses on the theft of a pen from the Prince of Wales's inkstand 91
To John Johnson, Esq. March 11. A nightingale heard on New-year's Day. Lady Hesketh gone. Mr. Rose expected 95
To the Rev. John Newton. March 18. He and Mrs. Unwin contented with their dual state, though happy when those whom they love were with them. Character of an old servant. Political remarks 96
To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. March 23. On his tragedy of Sir Thomas More, and his Cursory Remarks 98
To Lady Hesketh. March 25. Commencement of his intercourse with Hayley. Letter from Mr. Park . . 98
To Samuel Rose, Esq. March 30. Favourable opinion of Mr. Park's poetry 99
To the same. April 5. Sense of obligations. A secret enemy suspected 101

Page

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Sept. 21. Homer. Question concerning an allusion in one of Milton's Latin Poems 56

To Mrs. King. Oct. 21. Women better than men in all the most important points 58

To Clotworthy Rowley, Esq. Oct. 22. Reproach for not visiting him. Mention of an old friend. Milton . . 60

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Oct. 25. Pleasures received from his visit. Poem by Lord Bagot 62

To John Johnson, Esq. Oct. 31. Miscellaneous . . . 63

To Joseph Hill, Esq. Nov. 14. Compound epithets. Translation of Milton's Latin poem 65

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Dec. 5. Remarks on Homer considered 66

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Dec. 10. His task with Milton an agreeable one. Offer of Hurdis to be his advocate with the public 68

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Dec. 21. Putting off his visit on account of Mrs. Unwin's paralytic seizure 69

1792.

To the Rev. John Newton. Jan. 1. Mrs. Unwin's illness 70

To Mrs. King. Jan. 26. On the same subject. A suffering courage more meritorious than an active one . 72

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Feb. 14. A line in Homer accidentally omitted. Limits of a Commentator's province. Correspondence with Thurlow 73

To Lord Thurlow. ——. Wondering at his preference of rhyme, and replying to some strictures on the Homer 75

Lord Thurlow to William Cowper, Esq. ——. On the principle of translation 76

To Lord Thurlow. ——. In reply 80

From Lord Thurlow to William Cowper, Esq. ——. Acknowledging that Homer may be better translated in blank verse than in rhyme 82

Page

To Lord Thurlow. ——. Closing the correspondence . 83

To the Rev. John Newton. Feb. 20. Amended copy of his lines for Miss Patty More's album. Speculations on the settlements at Botany Bay and Sierra Leone . 84

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Feb. 21. Thanks for his strictures on the Homer. Plan of the commentary on Milton not yet settled 86

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. March 2. Strictures alluded to. Proposed dedication of Hurdis's Sir Thomas More accepted. The Throckmortons about to remove from Weston 87

To the Rev. John Newton. March 4. Altered copy of the album verses. Mr. Courtenay, Sir John Throckmorton's brother, about to reside at the Hall. Reflections on the changes of life 89

To Mrs. King. March 8. Her imprudence blamed, in going to church on Christmas Day, before she was well recovered from a sharp fit of rheumatism. Verses on the theft of a pen from the Prince of Wales's inkstand 91

To John Johnson, Esq. March 11. A nightingale heard on New-year's Day. Lady Hesketh gone. Mr. Rose expected 93

To the Rev. John Newton. March 18. He and Mrs. Unwin contented with their dual state, though happy when those whom they love were with them. Character of an old servant. Political remarks 94

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. March 23. On his tragedy of Sir Thomas More, and his Cursory Remarks 96

To Lady Hesketh. March 25. Commencement of his intercourse with Hayley. Letter from Mr. Park . . 98

To Samuel Rose, Esq. March 30. Favourable opinion of Mr. Park's poetry 99

To the same. April 5. Sense of obligations. A secret enemy suspected 100

Page

To William Hayley, Esq. April 6. Sudden friendships. Invitation to Weston. Brief account of himself . . . 101

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. April 8. In debt to all his correspondents. Mr. Hurdis's sisters 103

To Lady Throckmorton. April 16. Some of his verses stolen. Accused of being a friend to the Slave Trade . 104

To the Rev. J. Jekyll Rye. April 16. Origin of the calumnious report 106

To Lady Hesketh. April 26. Anticipation of Hayley's visit. Cowper an admirer of sonnets 108

To the same. May 5. Alternations of fortune. Dr. Madan made a Bishop. Lines to Warren Hastings 110

To John Johnson, Esq. May 20. On his preparation for orders. Hayley at Weston 112

To Lady Hesketh. May 24. Mrs. Unwin's paralytic stroke 113

To the same. May 26. Hayley's kindness. Her proffered services not necessary 115

To the Rev. Mr. Carwardine. May 28. Thanks for presenting his poems to the Chancellor's daughter . . . 116

To Mrs. Bodham. June 4. Not sorry that his cousin Johnson's ordination is delayed 117

To William Hayley, Esq. June 4. Mrs. Unwin better. They look with pleasure to a visit at Eartham . . . 118

To the same. June 5. Hayley's zeal to serve him acknowledged 119

To Lady Hesketh. June 6. Mrs. Unwin. Litle hope of success from Hayley's application to the Chancellor . . 120

To William Hayley, Esq. June 7. Mrs. Unwin's amendment 122

To the same. June 10. His cousin Johnson arrived. Complimentary stanzas to Darwin 123

To Lady Hesketh. June 11. He lives only to write letters. Eventfulness of the last two months 124

Page

To the Rev. Thomas Carwardine. June 11. Hayley's interview with the Chancellor. Thurlow's secret benevolence 127

To Mrs. King. June 12. Mrs. Unwin's illness. Hayley 129

To William Hayley, Esq. July 4. Intended visit. Arrival of his friends at Weston Hall 131

To Mr. Johnson. July 8. His engagement with Milton presses on his spirits. Richard Coleman 132

To William Hayley, Esq. July 15. Confinement with Mrs. Unwin. Abbot's portrait of him 133

To Lady Hesketh. July 21. Portrait. Money matters. Arrangements for the journey to Eartham 135

To the Rev. William Bull. July 25. Portrait. Time for the journey fixed 137

To the Rev. Thomas Carwardine. July 27. Respecting their meeting on the road 139

To the Rev. Mr. Greatheed. Aug. 6. Arrival at Eartham. Account of the journey thither 139

To Mrs. Courtenay. Aug. 12. Account of the journey. Weston will not be less dear to him when he returns . 141

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Aug. 14. Inviting him to Eartham 143

To the Rev. John Newton. Aug. 16. Eartham. Mrs. Unwin's improvement 143

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Aug. 18. A hasty note . . . 145

To Mrs. Courtenay. Aug. 25. Fop's epitaph. Time for their return fixed 145

To Lady Hesketh. Aug. 26. Fear of losing his friends by death 147

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Aug. 26. On his sister's death. Invitation to Eartham 149

To Lady Hesketh. Sept. 9. Scenery of Eartham less suited to him than that of Weston 151

To William Hayley, Esq. Sept. 18. Written on the road homeward 153

Page

To William Hayley, Esq. Sept. 21. Arrival at Weston. Visit of General Cowper on the way 153

To the same. Oct. 2. His spirits almost constantly lower than they were. Unsuccessful attempt to begin his commentary 155

To William Hayley, Esq. Oct. 13. Expecting Hayley's portrait. Romney. Hopelessness 156

To Mrs. King. Oct. 14. Telling her of his return home, and that the journey has only proved to him what he knew before,—that health and cure are from God only . 158

To the Rev. John Newton. Oct. 18. Concerning his own state of health and spirits. The benefit derived from his journey less than he had hoped 159

To John Johnson, Esq. Oct. 19. Wishing for his company. Sonnet to Romney. Baker's Chronicle . . . 161

To the same. Oct. 22. Oppressed with correspondence. Mr. Johnson right in sitting for his picture 162

To William Hayley, Esq. Oct. 28. Milton especially his grievance. Sonnet to Romney 163

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Nov. 9. Complaint of a want of spirits such as he had never known when not absolutely disabled. Objection to having his portrait prefixed to his Poems, yet, if it be thought advantageous, to consent 164

To the Rev. John Newton. Nov. 11. Much occupied, and much depressed in spirits. Speculations tending sometimes to Dualism 166

To John Johnson, Esq. Nov. 20. Thanks for some verses. Application from the Northampton clerk's successor . 168

To William Hayley, Esq. Nov. 25. A promise to acknowledge Hayley's friendship in some of his best verse. Increasing melancholy 169

To Lady Hesketh. Dec. 1. His sixty-first birthday. Some of his friends displeased at his connexion with Hayley. Bookseller's intention of publishing his Poems

Page

in quarto, and giving him the profits. Politics. Cowper a reformer 171

To the Rev. John Newton. Dec. 9. More concerning the opinion avowed in his last. Not pressed for his commentary. Apprehension as January approaches . . . 174

To Joseph Hill, Esq. Dec. 16. Politics. Views of reform 176

To William Hayley, Esq. Dec. 26. This year the most melancholy he had ever known, and principally made so by his ill-fated engagement to Milton 178

1793.

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Jan. 6. Condolence. Effect of affliction 179

To Lady Hesketh. Jan. 19. Charlotte Smith's new novel expected. Politics an apology for apparent rudeness. Money flies fast; but it is taxation that impoverishes him, not hangers-on 180

To William Hayley, Esq. Jan. 20. Arrival of Hayley's portrait 182

To the same. Jan. 29. On the death of Dr. Austin . . 184

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Feb. 5. Satisfied that his Homer must make its way in time 185

To Lady Hesketh. Feb. 10. Obliged to prepare for Mr. Rose's coming, by laudanum. Lady Hesketh a Tory . 186

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Feb. 17. On the Analytical Review of his Homer 187

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Feb. 23. Congratulates him on the prospect of his being chosen Poetry Professor. Notices of natural history 188

To William Hayley, Esq. Feb. 24. Tormented with weak eyes. Dream of Milton 190

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. March 4. Though a Whig he agrees with him in his sentiments concerning the French 192

To Mr. Thomas Hayley. March 14. In reply to the boy's criticisms 192

Page

To William Hayley, Esq. March 19. Oppressed with business. Unable either to go to Eartham or to fulfil a conditional promise of visiting his relations in Norfolk . 195

To Samuel Rose, Esq. March 27. Thanks for concluding the transaction with his publisher. Doubts whether to print the alterations in his Homer separately 196

To John Johnson, Esq. April 11. His pedigree. Mr. Johnson about to stand for his degree, and to take orders 197

To William Hayley, Esq. April 23. Busy in writing notes to Homer 199

To the Rev. John Newton. April 25. Mrs. Unwin's state and his own. Interchange of religious books with Dr. Cogshall, of New York. Mr. Waring's objection to Van Lier's letters. Cowper surprised at finding that an English epitaph had been placed on his friend Unwin's tomb-stone, instead of the Latin one which he had been requested to compose 199

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. May 4. Condolence on the death of a brother 202

To Samuel Rose, Esq. May 5. Time which he used to allot to his correspondents, now given to his studies. Commenting a more laborious task than translating . . 203

To Lady Hesketh. May 7. Confession that he is overworking himself. Principles of a true Whig . . . 205

To William Hayley, Esq. May 21. Old age stealing on him. "Man as he is" ascribed to Hayley 206

To Lady Hesketh. June 1. 207

To Mr. R. Phillips. June 14. In reply to an aplication for his assistance 209

To the same. June 23. Declining to write on his behalf . 210

To Lady Hesketh. June 30. Not lavish in alms. Building a summer-house. An octavo edition of his Homer called for. He will not leave Weston for Norfolk . . 211

Page

To William Hayley, Esq. July 7. Intended cooperation in a poem on the Four Ages. Improvements in his premises. Sultry weather 213

To the Rev. Mr. Greathead. July 23. Declining an invitation 215

To William Hayley, Esq. July 24. Inscriptions for a bust of Homer. Question concerning his blindness. Improvements 217

To Mrs. Charlotte Smith. July 25. On her dedication of a poem to him 219

To Lady Hesketh. Aug. 11. Miss Fanshaw. Present from Lady Spencer of Flaxman's designs for the Odyssey 220

To William Hayley, Esq. Aug. 15. Improvements. Flaxman's designs. Inscription for the bust 221

To Mrs. Courtenay. Aug. 20. Weston news. A ball and a robbery 223

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Aug. 22. Disposal of his mornings 225

To William Hayley, Esq. Aug. 27. Flaxman's design from Homer. Recollections of Lord Mansfield . . . 226

To Lady Hesketh. Aug. 29. Winter the season in which he has most need of society. Miss Fanshaw 228

To the Rev. John Johnson. Sept. 6. Arrival and erection of a sun-dial which Mr. Johnson had sent 229

To William Hayley, Esq. Sept. 8. His cheerfulness simulated. Thomas Hayley and Romney invited to Weston . 231

To Mrs. Courtenay. Sept. 15. Improvements in his premises. His family originally from Fifeshire 232

To the Rev. John Johnson. Sept. 29. Commending him for having left off rhyming. Rose expected at Weston and Lawrence with him 234

To William Hayley, Esq. Oct. 5. His time taken up by unwelcome letters. A good book cannot be too long . . 235

Page

To William Hayley, Esq. Oct. 18. A hasty note in expectation of his arrival 236

To the Rev. J. Jekyll Rye. Nov. 3. Thanking him for going to Oxford to vote for Hurdis; and for a hint concerning his next Mortuary Verses 237

To Mrs. Courtenay. Nov. 4. Written on a wet day. Hayley at Weston 238

To Joseph Hill, Esq. Nov. 5. Description of the situation of his house at Weston 239

To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Nov. 10. Thanks for his aid in Hurdis's election. Political fears 240

To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Nov. 24. Congratulating him on his obtaining the Professorship 242

To Samuel Rose, Esq. Nov. 29. Subjects for painting suggested to Lawrence. Cowper consents to have his portrait engraved 243

To the same. Dec. 8. Remarks on Jonathan Wild, and Man as he is 245

To William Hayley, Esq. Dec. 8. Impatient for his Life of Milton. The Four Ages 246

To the same. Dec. 17. Criticism on some lines of Homer as translated by Thurlow, by Hayley, and by himself . 247

1794.

To the same. Jan. 5. On the same subject. Principles of translation 249

1798.

To the Rev. John Newton. July 29 252

1799.

To the same. April 11 253

The two last letters were written during the last stage of Cowper's malady.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page
River Ouse 255
Rev. Isaac Nicholson 256
John Cowper and the Fortune Teller 257
Letter to the Editor 257
Thomas Raban 261
Fragment of a letter from Cowper to Mr. Newton, Aug. 31, 1780 262
Small loans 265
Prior's Henry and Emma 267
Remarkable fog of 1783 268
Hard frost of 1783-4 271
Caraccioli 272
Imitation of Lowth by Cowper 276
The Rev. Matthew Powley 276
His conduct and treatment at Oxford 277
The Boar's Head 279
Extracts from Lady Huntingdon's letters to him . . . 281
Extracts from Mr. Newton's 282
Letter from M. A. June 22, 1772 284
Letter from Mr. Newton. Aug. 8, 1778 286
Extract from a Letter of Mr. Thornton's 288
Mrs. Powley 289
Letter from the Rev. J. Stillingfleet 290
Newton on Handel's Messiah 292
Bishop Bagot 293
Letters of Literature 297
Odour of the soil 302
Nonumque primatur in annum 303
Singing of the Swan 305
Mrs. King 306
The Slave Trade is a subject for poetry 307
Cowper's ideal description of Mrs. King 308

Page
Professor Martyn 308
Mrs. Battison 309
Cowper's drawings 309
His articles in the Analytical Review 310
Glover's Athenaid 310
Dwight's Conquest of Canaan 314
Darwin's Loves of the Plants 319
Mr. Twining 321
Odes falsely ascribed to Horace 321
Professor Martyn's great botannical work 321

LETTERS TO MR. PARK.

Feb. 19, 1792. Thanks for some materials for his edition of Milton. Parallel passages 322
March 10, 1792. On Mr. Park's employment as an engraver, and his own little learning 323
March 30, 1792. Returning and praising a MS. poem written by Mr. Park at the age of twenty 325
April 27, 1792. Remarks on other of Mr. Park's poems . 326
July 20, 1792. Interrupted in his editorial labours and in his private criticism by Mrs. Unwin's illness 327
Dec. 17, 1792. Apology for long silence. Thanks to Mr. Park for offering to engrave his portrait 328
Jan. 3, 1793. Introducing Mr. Rose to him. State of Cowper's eyes 329
May 17, 1793. Chapman's Homer. Specimen of another. Chapman's poetry. Mr. Unwin's epitaph 330
July 15, 1793. Chapman's Homer and Hobbes's . . . 332

Thomas Hayley's letter to Cowper, referred to at p. 192 . 333

John Johnson

THE

LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Feb. 27, 1791.

Now, my dearest Johnny, I must tell thee in few words how much I love and am obliged to thee for thy affectionate services.

My Cambridge honours are all to be ascribed to you, and to you only. Yet you are but a little man; and a little man into the bargain who have kicked the mathematics, their idol, out of your study. So important are the endings which Providence frequently connects with small beginnings. Had you been here, I could have furnished you with much employment; for I have so dealt with your fair MSS. in the course of my polishing and improving, that I have almost blotted out the whole. Such however as it is, I must now send it to the printer, and he must be content with it, for there is not time to make a fresh copy. We are now printing the second book of the Odyssey.

Should the Oxonians bestow none of their notice on me on this occasion, it will happen singularly

enough, that as Pope received all his university honours in the subscription way from Oxford, and none at all from Cambridge, so I shall have received all mine from Cambridge, and none from Oxford. This is the more likely to be the case, because I understand that on whatsoever occasion either of those learned bodies thinks fit to move, the other always makes it a point to sit still, thus proving its superiority.

I shall send up your letter to Lady Hesketh in a day or two, knowing that the intelligence contained in it will afford her the greatest pleasure. Know likewise for your own gratification, that all the Scotch universities have subscribed, none excepted.

We are all as well as usual; that is to say, as well as reasonable folks expect to be on the crazy side of this frail existence.

I rejoice that we shall so soon have you again at our fireside.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

DEAREST MADAM, Weston Underwood, March 2, 1791.

I AM sick and ashamed of myself that I forgot my promise; but it is actually true that I did forget it. You, however, I did not forget; nor did I forget to wonder and to be alarmed at your silence, being myself perfectly unconscious of my arrears. All this, together with various other trespasses of mine must be set down to the account of Homer; and wherever he is, he is bound to make his apology to all my correspondents, but to you in particular. True it is, that if Mrs. Unwin did not call me from that pursuit, I should

forget, in the ardour with which I persevere in it, both to eat and drink and retire to rest. This zeal has increased in me regularly as I have proceeded, and in an exact ratio, as a mathematician would say, to the progress I have made toward the point at which I have been aiming. You will believe this, when I tell you, that, not contented with my previous labours, I have actually revised the whole work, and have made a thousand alterations in it, since it has been in the press. I have now, however, tolerably well satisfied myself at least, and trust that the printer and I shall trundle along merrily to the conclusion. I expect to correct the proof-sheets of the third book of the Odyssey to day.

Thus it is, as I believe I have said to you before, that you are doomed to hear of nothing but Homer from me. There is less of gallantry than of nature in this proceeding. When I write to you, I think of nothing but the subject that is uppermost, and that uppermost is always Homer. Then I consider that though, as a lady, you have a right to expect other treatment at my hands, you are a lady who has a husband, and that husband an old schoolfellow of mine, and who, I know, interests himself in my success.

I am likely, after all, to gather a better harvest of subscribers at Cambridge than I expected. A little cousin of mine, an undergraduate of Caius' College, suggested to me, when he was here in the summer, that it might not be amiss to advertise the work at Merril's the bookseller. I acquiesced in the measure; and at his return he pasted me on a board, and hung me in the shop, as it has proved in the event, much to

my emolument. For many, as I understand, have subscribed in consequence, and among the rest several of the public libraries.

I am glad that you have seen the last Northampton dirge, for the rogue of a clerk sent me only half the number of printed copies for which I stipulated with him at first, and they were all expended immediately. The poor man himself is dead now; and whether his successor will continue me in my office, or seek another laureate, has not yet transpired.

I began with being ashamed, and I must end with being so. I am ashamed that, when I wrote by your messenger, I omitted to restore to you Mr. Martyn's letter: but it is safe, and shall be yours again. I am sorry that you have suffered so much this winter by your old complaint the rheumatism. We shall both, I hope, be better in a better season, now not very distant; for I have never myself been free from my fever since the middle of January; neither do I expect to be released till summer shall set me free.

I am, my dear madam, with Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to yourself and Mr. King,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

Lady Hesketh has left us about a month.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, March 6, 1791.

AFTER all this ploughing and sowing on the plains of Troy, once fruitful, such at least to my translating predecessor, some harvest I hope will arise for me

also. My long work has received its last, last touches; and I am now giving my preface its final adjustment. We are in the fourth Odyssey in the course of our printing, and I expect that I and the swallows shall appear together. They have slept all the winter, but I, on the contrary, have been extremely busy. Yet if I can *virûm volitare per ora* as swiftly as they through the air, I shall account myself well requited.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

SIR, Weston, March 6, 1791.

I HAVE always entertained, and have occasionally avowed, a great degree of respect for the abilities of the unknown author of the Village Curate, unknown at that time, but now well known, and not to me only, but to many. For before I was favoured with your obliging letter, I knew your name, your place of abode, your profession, and that you had four sisters; all which I learned neither from our bookseller, nor from any of his connexions; you will perceive therefore that you are no longer an author incognito. The writer indeed of many passages that have fallen from your pen could not long continue so. Let genius, true genius, conceal itself where it may, we may say of it, as the young man in Terence of his beautiful mistress, "*Diu latere non potest.*"

I am obliged to you for your kind offers of service, and will not say that I shall not be troublesome to you hereafter; but at present I have no need to be so.

I have within these two days given the very last stroke of my pen to my long Translation, and what will be my next career I know not. At any rate we shall not, I hope, hereafter be known to each other as poets only, for your writings have made me ambitious of a nearer approach to you. Your door, however, will never be opened to me. My fate and fortune have combined with my natural disposition to draw a circle round me which I cannot pass; nor have I been more than thirteen miles from home these twenty years, and so far very seldom. But you are a younger man, and therefore may not be quite so immoveable; in which case, should you choose at any time to move Westonward, you will always find me happy to receive you; and in the mean time I remain, with much respect,

Your most obedient servant, critic, and friend,

W. C.

P. S. I wish to know what you mean to do with Sir Thomas[1]. For though I expressed doubts about his theatrical possibilities, I think him a very respectable person, and with some improvement well worthy of being introduced to the public.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

March 10, 1791.

GIVE my affectionate remembrances to your sisters, and tell them I am impatient to entertain them with my old story new dressed.

[1] Sir Thomas More, a Tragedy.

I have two French prints hanging in my study, both on Iliad subjects; and I have an English one in the parlour, on a subject from the same poem. In one of the former, Agamemnon addresses Achilles exactly in the attitude of a dancing-master turning miss in a minuet: in the latter the figures are plain, and the attitudes plain also. This is, in some considerable measure I believe, the difference between my translation and Pope's; and will serve as an exemplification of what I am going to lay before you and the public.

W. C.

TO CLOTWORTHY ROWLEY, ESQ.

Weston Underwood,

MY DEAR ROWLEY, March 14, 1791.

MONDAY morning is a time that I now devote to my correspondents in particular, and therefore I devote the present morning to you. Monday is a *dies non Homericus*, a day on which, having dispatched all the proof sheets of the preceding week, and as yet received no others, I am free from all engagement to Homer.

I have sent my bookseller the names which you transmitted to me (for which I now thank you, with a lively sense of the kindness you have shown, and of the honour they will do me). I have sent them copied with the greatest care. There is no danger, I hope, that they will not be accurately printed, for I shall revise the proofs of the subscription list myself. I have also given him the minutest instructions, and the clearest possible, concerning the conveyance of the books to your country as soon as they shall be ready

for exportation, copying them from your letter. Thus nothing has been or shall be wanting on my part to promote the proper management, and effect a decent conclusion of this business.

And now I will say, Oh my poor worried and tormented friend! why wast thou not, like me, a writer of verses, or almost any thing rather than a member of parliament? Had you been only a poor poet, the critics indeed might probably have given you some trouble; for that inconvenience no poet may hope to escape entirely, but the trouble that they can give, how trivial is it compared with that of a contested election! I heartily wish you well out of all this troublesome business, and hope that you will be able to tell me in your next that you are, and that all is settled to your mind.

I inquired of you in my last, if you knew aught, or had ever by accident heard of such a person as a Mr. Kellet of Cork, a banker. Application was made to him long since for a subscription to my Homer, and for his interest on that behalf, but he has returned no answer. He is a sort of relation of mine by marriage, having chosen his wife out of my own mother's family, and his silence on this occasion makes me curious to know whether, as Homer says, he still opens his eyes on the bright lamp of day, or have already journeyed down into the house of Hades. If you can possibly, without giving yourself the least trouble,—for of that you have already as much as may content any reasonable man,—procure me any intelligence respecting this dumb body, you will oblige me by doing so.

My subscribers' names, all that had entered at that time, were published in the Gentleman's Magazine and in the Analytical Review of the last month. Should either of them fall in your way, you will see that I shall introduce you and your friends into no unworthy company; several splendid names have also been added since.

I am, my dear Rowley, most truly yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, March 18, 1791.

I GIVE you joy that you are about to receive some more of my elegant prose, and I feel myself in danger of attempting to make it even more elegant than usual, and thereby of spoiling it, under the influence of your commendations. But my old helter-skelter manner has already succeeded so well, that I will not, even for the sake of entitling myself to a still greater portion of your praise, abandon it.

I did not call in question Johnson's true spirit of poetry, because he was not qualified to relish blank verse (though, to tell you the truth, I think that but an ugly symptom); but if I did not express it I meant however to infer it from the perverse judgement that he has formed of our poets in general; depreciating some of the best, and making honourable mention of others, in my opinion not undeservedly neglected. I will lay you sixpence that, had he lived in the days of Milton, and by any accident had met with his Paradise Lost, he would neither have directed the atten-

tion of others to it, nor have much admired it himself. Good sense, in short, and strength of intellect, seem to me, rather than a fine taste, to have been his distinguished characteristics. But should you still think otherwise, you have my free permission; for so long as you have yourself a taste for the beauties of Cowper, I care not a fig whether Johnson had a taste or not.

I wonder where you find all your quotations, pat as they are to the present condition of France. Do you make them yourself, or do you actually find them? I am apt to suspect sometimes, that you impose them only on a poor man who has but twenty books in the world, and two of them are your brother Chester's. They are however much to the purpose, be the author of them who he may.

I was very sorry to learn lately that my friend at Chicheley has been some time indisposed, either with gout or rheumatism, (for it seems to be uncertain which) and attended by Dr. Kerr. I am at a loss to conceive how so temperate a man should acquire the gout, and am resolved therefore to conclude that it must be the rheumatism, which, bad as it is, is in my judgement the best of the two; and will afford me besides some opportunity to sympathize with him, for I am not perfectly exempt from it myself. Distant as you are in situation, you are yet perhaps nearer to him in point of intelligence than I; and if you can send me any particular news of him, pray do it in your next.

I love and thank you for your benediction. If God forgive me my sins, surely I shall love him much, for

I have much to be forgiven. But the quantum need not discourage me, since there is one whose atonement can suffice for all.

Τῦ δὲ καθ' αἷμα ῥέεν, καὶ σοὶ, καὶ ἐμοὶ, καὶ ἀδελφοῖς
Ἡμετέροις, αὐτῦ σωζομένοις θανάτῳ.

Accept our joint remembrances, and believe me affectionately yours.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, March 19, 1791.

You ask if it may not be improper to solicit Lady Hesketh's subscription to the poems of the Norwich maiden? To which I reply, it will be by no means improper. On the contrary, I am persuaded that she will give her name with a very good will, for she is much an admirer of poesy that is worthy to be admired, and such I think, judging by the specimen, the poesy of this maiden, Elizabeth Bentley of Norwich, is likely to prove.

Not that I am myself inclined to expect in general great matters, in the poetical way, from persons whose ill fortune it has been to want the common advantages of education; neither do I account it in general a kindness to such, to encourage them in the indulgence of a propensity more likely to do them harm in the end, than to advance their interest. Many such phenomena have arisen within my remembrance, at which all the world has wondered for a season, and has then forgot them.

The fact is, that though strong natural genius is always accompanied with strong natural tendency to its object, yet it often happens that the tendency is found where the genius is wanting. In the present instance however, (the poems of a certain Mrs. Leapor excepted, who published some forty years ago,) I discern, I think, more marks of a true poetical talent than I remember to have observed in the verses of any other, male or female, so disadvantageously circumstanced. I wish her therefore good speed, and subscribe to her with all my heart.

You will rejoice when I tell you that I have some hopes, after all, of a harvest from Oxford also; Mr. Throckmorton has written to a person of considerable influence there, which he has desired him to exert in my favour; and *his* request, I should imagine, will hardly prove a vain one.

Adieu.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, March 24, 1791.

You apologize for your silence in a manner which affords me so much pleasure, that I cannot but be satisfied. Let business be the cause, and I am contented. This is a cause to which I would even be accessary myself, and would increase yours by any means, except by a lawsuit of my own, at the expense of all your opportunities of writing oftener than thrice in a twelvemonth.

Your application to Dr. Dunbar reminds me of two lines to be found somewhere in Dr. Young:

> "And now a poet's gratitude you see,
> Grant him two favours, and he'll ask for three."

In this particular therefore I perceive that a poet, and a poet's friend, bear a striking resemblance to each other. The Doctor will bless himself that the number of Scotch universities is not larger, assured that if they equalled those in England, in number of colleges, you would give him no rest till he had engaged them all. It is true, as Lady Hesketh told you, that I shall not fear in the matter of subscription a comparison even with Pope himself; considering (I mean) that we live in days of terrible taxation, and when verse, not being a necessary of life, is accounted dear, be it what it may, even at the lowest price. I am no very good arithmetician, yet I calculated the other day in my morning walk, that my two volumes, at the price of three guineas, will cost the purchaser less than the seventh part of a farthing per line. Yet there are lines among them that have cost me the labour of hours, and none that have not cost me some labour.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, Friday night, March 25, 1791.

JOHNSON writes me word that he has repeatedly called on Horace Walpole, and has never found him at home. He has also written to him, and received no answer. I charge thee therefore on thy allegiance,

that thou move not a finger more in this business. My back is up, and I cannot bear the thought of wooing him any further, nor would do it, though he were as *pig* a gentleman (look you!) as Lucifer himself. I have Welsh blood in me, if the pedigree of the Donnes say true, and every drop of it says—"Let him alone!"

I should have dined at the Hall to day, having engaged myself to do so; but an untoward occurrence, that happened last night, or rather this morning, prevented me. It was a thundering rap at the door, just after the clock struck three. First, I thought the house was on fire. Then I thought the Hall was on fire. Then I thought it was a housebreaker's trick. Then I thought it was an express. In any case I thought that if it should be repeated, it would awaken and terrify Mrs. Unwin, and kill her with spasms. The consequence of all these thoughts was the worst nervous fever I ever had in my life, although it was the shortest. The rap was given but once, though a multifarious one. Had I heard a second, I should have risen myself at all adventures. It was the only minute since you went, in which I have been glad that you were not here. Soon after I came down, I learned that a drunken party had passed through the village at that time, and they were no doubt the authors of this witty, but troublesome invention.

Our thanks are due to you for the book you sent us. Mrs. Unwin has read to me several parts of it, which I have much admired. The observations are shrewd and pointed; and there is much wit in the similes and illustrations. Yet a remark struck me, which I could not help making *vivâ vace* on the occasion. If the

book has any real value, and does in truth deserve the notice taken of it by those to whom it is addressed, its claim is founded neither on the expression, nor on the style, nor on the wit of it, but altogether on the truth that it contains. Now the same truths are delivered, to my knowledge, perpetually from the pulpit by ministers whom the admirers of this writer would disdain to hear. Yet the truth is not the less important for not being accompanied and recommended by brilliant thoughts and expressions; neither is God, from whom comes all truth, any more a respecter of wit than he is of persons. It will appear soon whether they applaud the book for the sake of its unanswerable arguments, or only tolerate the argument for the sake of the splendid manner in which it is enforced. I wish as heartily that it may do them good, as if I were myself the author of it. But alas! my wishes and hopes are much at variance. It will be the talk of the day, as another publication of the same kind has been; and then the noise of Vanity Fair will drown the voice of the preacher.

I am glad to learn that the Chancellor does not forget me, though more for his sake than my own; for I see not how he can ever serve a man like me.

Adieu, my dearest coz.

W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

MY DEAR MRS. FROG, April 1, 1791.

A WORD or two before breakfast; which is all that I shall have time to send you.—You have not, I hope, forgot to tell Mr. Frog, how much I am obliged to

him for his kind though unsuccessful attempt in my favour at Oxford. It seems not a little extraordinary, that persons so nobly patronized themselves on the score of literature, should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it.

> Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
> And tune his harp at Rhedycina's door,
> The rich old vixen would exclaim (I fear),
> "Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

I have read your husband's pamphlet through and through. You may think perhaps, and so may he, that a question so remote from all concern of mine could not interest me; but if you think so, you are both mistaken. He can write nothing that will not interest me; in the first place, for the writer's sake; and in the next place, because he writes better and reasons better than any body,—with more candour, and with more sufficiency, and consequently with more satisfaction to all his readers, save only his opponents. They, I think, by this time wish that they had let him alone.

Tom is delighted past measure with his wooden nag, and gallops at a rate that would kill any horse that had a life to lose.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOHNNY, Weston, April 6, 1791.

A THOUSAND thanks for your splendid assemblage of Cambridge luminaries! If you are not contented with your collection, it can only be because you are unreasonable; for I, who may be supposed more covetous on this occasion than any body, am highly satisfied, and even delighted with it. If indeed you should find it practicable to add still to the number, I have not the least objection. But this charge I give you,

Ἄλλο δὲ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι,

stay not an hour beyond the time you have mentioned, even though you should be able to add a thousand names by so doing! For I cannot afford to purchase them at that cost. I long to see you, and so do we both, and will not suffer you to postpone your visit for any such consideration. No, my dear boy! in the affair of subscriptions we are already illustrious enough; shall be so at least, when you shall have enlisted a college or two more, which perhaps you may be able to do in the course of the ensuing week. I feel myself much obliged to your university, and much disposed to admire the liberality of spirit they have shown on this occasion. Certainly I had not deserved much favour of their hands, all things considered. But the cause of literature seems to have some weight with them, and to have superseded the resentment they might be supposed to entertain on the score of certain censures that you wot of. It is not so at Oxford.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 29, 1791.

I FORGOT if I told you that Mr. Throckmorton had applied through the medium of ——— to the university of Oxford. He did so, but without success. Their answer was, "that they subscribe to nothing."

Pope's subscriptions did not amount, I think, to six hundred; and mine will not fall very far short of five. Noble doings, at a time of day when Homer has no news to tell us; and when, all other comforts of life having risen in price, poetry has of course fallen. I call it a "comfort of life;" it is so to others, but to myself it is become even a necessary.

These holiday times are very unfavourable to the printer's progress. He and all his demons are making themselves merry and me sad, for I mourn at every hinderance.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, May 2, 1791.

MONDAY being a day in which Homer has now no demands upon me, I shall give part of the present Monday to you. But it this moment occurs to me, that the proposition with which I begin will be obscure to you, unless followed by an explanation. You are to understand therefore, that Monday being no post-day, I have consequently no proof-sheets to correct, the correction of which is nearly all that I have to do with Homer at present; I say nearly all, because I

am likewise occasionally employed in reading over the whole of what is already printed, that I may make a table of errata to each of the poems. How much is already printed say you?—I answer—the whole Iliad, and almost seventeen books of the Odyssey.

About a fortnight since, perhaps three weeks, I had a visit from your nephew, Mr. Bagot, and his tutor, Mr. Hurlock, who came hither under conduct of your niece, Miss Barbara. So were the friends of Ulysses conducted to the palace of Antiphates, the Læstrygonian, by that monarch's daughter. But mine is no palace, neither am I a giant, neither did I devour any one of the party;—on the contrary, I gave them chocolate, and permitted them to depart in peace. I was much pleased both with the young man and his tutor. In the countenance of the former I saw much Bagotism, and not less in his manners. I will leave you to guess what I mean by that expression. Physiognomy is a study of which I have almost as high an opinion as Lavater himself, the professor of it, and for this good reason, because it never yet deceived me. But perhaps I shall speak more truly if I say that I am somewhat of an adept in the art, although I have *never studied* it; for whether I will or not, I judge of every human creature by the countenance, and as I say, have never yet seen reason to repent of my judgement. Sometimes I feel myself powerfully attracted, as I was by your nephew, and sometimes with equal vehemence repulsed, which attraction and repulsion have always been justified in the sequel.

I have lately read, and with more attention than I ever gave to them before, Milton's Latin poems. But

these I must make the subject of some future letter, in which it will be ten to one that your friend Samuel Johnson gets another slap or two at the hands of your humble servant. Pray read them yourself, and with as much attention as I did; then read the Doctor's remarks if you have them, and then tell me what you think of both. It will be pretty sport for you on such a day as this, which is the fourth that we have had of almost incessant rain. The weather, and a cold the effect of it, have confined me ever since last Thursday. Mrs. Unwin however is well, and joins me in every good wish to yourself and family. I am, my good friend,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. BUCHANAN.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, May 11, 1791.

You have sent me a beautiful poem, wanting nothing but metre. I would to Heaven that you would give it that requisite yourself; for he who could make the sketch, cannot but be well qualified to finish. But if you will not, I will; provided always nevertheless, that God gives me ability, for it will require no common share to do justice to your conceptions.

I am much yours,

W. C.

Your little messenger vanished before I could catch him.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, May 18, 1791.

HAS another of thy letters fallen short of its destination; or wherefore is it, that thou writest not? One letter in five weeks is a poor allowance for your friends at Weston. One that I received two or three days since from Mrs. Frog, has not at all enlightened me on this head. But I wander in a wilderness of vain conjecture.

I have had a letter lately from New York, from a Dr. Cogswell of that place, to thank me for my fine verses, and to tell me, which pleased me particularly, that after having read the Task, my first volume fell into his hands, which he read also, and was equally pleased with. This is the only instance I can recollect of a reader who has done justice to my first effusions: for I am sure, that in point of expression they do not fall a jot below my second, and that in point of subject they are for the most part superior. But enough, and too much of this. The Task he tells me has been reprinted in that city.

Adieu! my dearest coz.

We have blooming scenes under wintry skies, and with icy blasts to fan them.

Ever thine,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, May 23, 1791.

DID I not know that you are never more in your element, than when you are exerting yourself in my cause, I should congratulate you on the hope there seems to be that your labour will soon have an end.

You will wonder perhaps, my Johnny, that Mrs. Unwin, by my desire, enjoined you to secrecy concerning the translation of the Frogs and Mice. Wonderful it may well seem to you that I should wish to hide for a short time from a few, what I am just going to publish to all. But I had more reasons than one for this mysterious management; that is to say, I had two. In the first place, I wished to surprise my readers agreeably; and secondly, I wished to allow none of my friends an opportunity to object to the measure, who might think it perhaps a measure more bountiful than prudent. But I have had my sufficient reward, though not a pecuniary one. It is a poem of much humour, and accordingly I found the translation of it very amusing. It struck me too, that I must either make it a part of the present publication, or never publish it at all; it would have been so terribly out of its place in any other volume.

I long for the time that shall bring you once more to Weston, and all your *et ceteras* with you. O! what a month of May has this been! Let never poet, English poet at least, give himself to the praises of May again.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston Underwood, May 26, 1791.

It is high time that I should write, be it only to convince you that my regard for you will prompt me to it, even though I have not the pleasure of hearing from you. To say truth we have both been very anxious about you, verily believing that nothing less than severe indisposition would have kept you so long silent. If this be the case, I beg that you will not think of returning me an answer, for though it would give us the greatest pleasure to hear from you, we should be sincerely sorry to purchase that pleasure at your expense, and can only wish for a line on condition that you are able to write one without increasing the pain with which I suppose you afflicted.

With these apprehensions about you, I should certainly have made this enquiry much sooner, would my daily attentions to what is going forward in the press have permitted. This engagement has now been almost of a year's standing, and I am not even now released from it; but I rejoice to be able to say that my release is at hand, for the last line of the Odyssey will be printed this day. There remain the preface, the list of subscribers, and two or three odd matters beside, and then I shall be once more at liberty.

You have not, I think, forgotten, my dear Madam, that you and Mr. King gave us a hope of seeing you this summer at Weston. In a fortnight we expect some relations of mine from Norfolk; what stay they will make with us, is to us unknown at present, but I shall send you the earliest notice of their departure, in the

hope that you will supply their place as soon as possible. Years are waning apace, and if we mean to cultivate and improve the intercourse we have begun, there is no time to be lost. Let us not have it to say, when we meet in another world, that we might, if we would, have known each other better in this.

It is so long since I wrote my last letter to you, that I cannot at all recollect the date of it; but I seem to remember telling you in it, that I had narrowly escaped the greatest of all my terrors, a nervous fever. To say that I escaped it is indeed saying too much, for I question if I am at any time entirely free from it; but I thank God that I escaped the degree of it with which, in January, I seemed to be threatened. At present I am in pretty good health, yet not quite so well, I think, as in former years at this season. Mrs. Unwin, I believe, is about as well as when she had the pleasure to see you at Weston.

Thus, my dear Madam, I have said all that appears to me worth saying at present. I have told you how we fare ourselves, and that we are anxious to know how it fares with you. I will add nothing but Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, together with my own, to both our friends at Pertenhall, and I am,

Dear Madam,

Affectionately yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, May 27, 1791.

I, WHO am neither dead, nor sick, nor idle, should have no excuse, were I as tardy in answering, as you in writing. I live indeed where leisure abounds; and you, where leisure is not: a difference that accounts sufficiently both for your silence and my loquacity.

When you told Mrs. ————, that my Homer would come forth in May, you told her what you believed, and therefore no falsehood. But you told her at the same time what will not happen, and therefore not a truth. There is a medium between truth and falsehood; and (I believe) the word mistake expresses it exactly. I will therefore say that you were mistaken. If instead of May you had mentioned June, I flatter myself that you would have hit the mark. For in June there is every probability that we shall publish. You will say, "hang the printer!—for it is his fault." But stay, my dear, hang him not just now! For to execute him, and find another, will cost us time, and so much too that I question if, in that case, we should publish sooner than in August. To say truth, I am not perfectly sure that there will be any necessity to hang him at all; though that is a matter which I desire to leave entirely at your discretion, alleging only in the mean time, that the man does not appear to me during the last half-year to have been at all in fault. His remittance of sheets in all that time has been punctual, save and except while the Easter holidays lasted, when (I suppose) he found it impossible to keep his devils to their business. I

shall however receive the last sheet of the Odyssey to-morrow, and have already sent up the Preface, together with all the needful. You see therefore that the publication of this famous work cannot be delayed much longer.

As for politics, I reck not, having no room in my head for any thing but the Slave-bill. That is lost; and all the rest is a trifle. I have not seen Paine's book, but refused to see it when it was offered to me. No man shall convince me that I am improperly governed, while I feel the contrary.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, June 1, 1791.

Now you may rest—now I can give you joy of the period, of which I gave you hope in my last; the period of all your labours in my service. But this I can foretell you also, that if you persevere in serving your friends at this rate, your life is likely to be a life of labour:—Yet persevere! your rest will be the sweeter hereafter! In the mean time I wish you, if at any time you should find occasion for him, just such a friend as you have proved to me!

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, June 13, 1791.

I OUGHT to have thanked you for your agreeable and entertaining letter much sooner, but I have many correspondents, who will not be said, nay; and have been obliged of late to give my last attentions to Homer. The very last indeed; for yesterday I dispatched to town, after revising them carefully, the proof sheets of subscribers' names, among which I took special notice of yours, and am much obliged to you for it. We have contrived, or rather my bookseller and printer have contrived (for they have never waited a moment for me,) to publish as critically at the wrong time, as if my whole interest and success had depended upon it. March, April, and May, said Johnson to me in a letter that I received from him in February, are the best months for publication. *Therefore* now it is determined that Homer shall come out on the 1st of July; that is to say, exactly at the moment when, except a few lawyers, not a creature will be left in town who will ever care one farthing about him. To which of these two friends of mine I am indebted for this management, I know not. It does not please; but I would be a philosopher as well as a poet, and therefore make no complaint, or grumble at all about it. You, I presume, have had dealings with them both;—how did they manage for you? And if as they have for me, how did you behave under it? Some who love me complain that I am too passive; and I should be glad of an opportunity to justify myself by your example. The fact is, should I thunder ever so loud,

no efforts of that sort will avail me now; therefore like a good economist of my bolts, I choose to reserve them for more profitable occasions.

I am glad to find that your amusements have been so similar to mine; for in this instance too I seemed to have need of somebody to keep me in countenance, especially in my attention and attachment to animals. All the notice that we lords of the creation vouchsafe to bestow on the creatures, is generally to abuse them; it is well therefore that here and there a man should be found a little womanish, or perhaps a little childish in this matter, who will make some amends, by kissing, and coaxing, and laying them in one's bosom. You remember the little ewe lamb, mentioned by the prophet Nathan; the prophet perhaps invented the tale for the sake of its application to David's conscience; but it is more probable that God inspired him with it for that purpose. If he did, it amounts to a proof that he does not overlook, but on the contrary much notices such little partialities and kindness to his *dumb* creatures, as we, because we articulate, are pleased to call them.

Your sisters are fitter to judge than I, whether assembly rooms are the places of all others, in which the ladies may be studied to most advantage. I am an old fellow, but I had once my dancing days, as you have now; yet I could never find that I had learned half so much of a woman's real character by dancing with her, as by conversing with her at home, where I could observe her behaviour at the table, at the fireside, and in all the trying circumstances of domestic life. We are all good when we are pleased; but she is the good

woman, who wants not a fiddle to sweeten her. If I am wrong, the young ladies will set me right; in the mean time I will not tease you with graver arguments on the subject, especially as I have a hope that years, and the study of the Scripture, and His Spirit whose word it is, will in due time bring you to my way of thinking. I am not one of those sages, who require that young men should be as old as themselves before they have had time to be so.

With my love to your fair sisters, I remain,
Dear Sir, most truly yours,
W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The Lodge, June 15, 1791.

If it will afford you any comfort that you have a share in my affections, of that comfort you may avail yourself at all times. You have acquired it by means which, unless I should become worthless myself to an uncommon degree, will always secure you from the loss of it. You are learning what all learn, though few at so early an age, that man is an ungrateful animal; and that benefits too often, instead of securing a due return, operate rather as provocations to ill-treatment. This I take to be the *summum malum* of the human heart. Towards God we are all guilty of it more or less; but between man and man, we may thank God for it, there are some exceptions. He leaves this peccant principle to operate in some degree against himself in all, for our humiliation I suppose; and because the pernicious effects of it in reality

cannot injure him, he cannot suffer by them; but he knows that unless he should restrain its influence on the dealings of mankind with each other, the bonds of society would be dissolved, and all charitable intercourse at an end amongst us. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, "Do him an ill-turn, and you make him your *friend* for ever;" of others it may be said, "Do them a good one, and they will be for ever your *enemies*." It is the grace of God only that makes the difference.

The absence of Homer (for we have now shaken hands and parted) is well supplied by three relations of mine from Norfolk. My cousin Johnson, an aunt of his, and his sister. I love them all dearly, and am well contented to resign to them the place in my attentions so lately occupied by the chiefs of Greece and Troy. His aunt and I have spent many a merry day together, when we were some forty years younger; and we make shift to be merry together still. His sister is a sweet young woman, graceful, good-natured, and gentle, just what I had imagined her to be before I had seen her.

Farewell.

W. C.

TO DR. JAMES COGSWELL, NEW YORK.

Weston Underwood, near Olney, Bucks,
June 15, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter and obliging present from so great a distance deserved a speedier acknowledgment, and should not have wanted one so long, had not circumstances so

fallen out since I received them as to make it impossible for me to write sooner. It is indeed but within this day or two that I have heard how, by the help of my bookseller, I may transmit an answer to you.

My titlepage, as it well might, misled you. It speaks me of the Inner Temple, and so I am, but a member of that society only, not as an inhabitant. I live here almost at the distance of sixty miles from London, which I have not visited these eight-and-twenty years, and probably never shall again. Thus it fell out, that Mr. Morewood had sailed again for America before your parcel reached me; nor should I (it is likely) have received it at all, had not a cousin of mine, who lives in the Temple, by good fortune received it first, and opened your letter; finding for whom it was intended, he transmitted to me both that and the parcel. Your testimony of approbation of what I have published, coming from another quarter of the globe, could not but be extremely flattering, as was your obliging notice that the Task had been reprinted in your city. Both volumes, I hope, have a tendency to discountenance vice, and promote the best interests of mankind. But how far they shall be effectual to these invaluable purposes, depends altogether on His blessing, whose truths I have endeavoured to inculcate. In the mean time I have sufficient proof that readers may be pleased, may approve, and yet lay down the book unedified.

During the last five years I have been occupied with a work of a very different nature, a translation of the Iliad and Odyssey into blank verse, and the work is now ready for publication. I undertook it, partly

because Pope's is too lax a version, which has lately occasioned the learned of this country to call aloud for a new one, and partly because I could fall on no better expedient to amuse a mind too much addicted to melancholy.

I send you in return for the volumes with which you favoured me, three on religious subjects, popular productions that have not been long published, and that may not therefore yet have reached your country; The Christian Officer's Panoply, by a marine officer —The Importance of the Manners of the Great, and an Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World. The two last are said to be written by a lady, Miss Hannah More, and are universally read by people of that rank to which she addresses them. Your manners I suppose may be more pure than ours, yet it is not unlikely that even among you may be found some to whom her strictures are applicable. I return you my thanks, Sir, for the volumes you sent me, two of which I have read with pleasure, Mr. Edwards's book, and the Conquest of Canaan. The rest I have not had time to read, except Dr. Dwight's Sermon, which pleased me almost more than any that I have either seen or heard.

I shall account a correspondence with you an honour, and remain, dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 23, 1791.

SEND me a draft, my dearest coz, for as much money as I hope thou hast by this time received on my account, viz. from Anonymous, and viz. from Wm. Cowper, for we are driven to our last guinea. Let me have it by Sunday's post, lest we become absolutely insolvent.

> We have received beef, tongues, and tea,
> And certainly from none but thee;
> Therefore with all our power of songs,
> Thanks for beef, and tea, and tongues!

As I said, so it proves. I told you that I should like our guests when they had been here a day or two, and accordingly I like them so well now that it is impossible to like them better. Mrs. Balls is an unaffected, plain-dressing, good-tempered, cheerful, motherly sort of a body, and has the affection of a parent for her niece and nephew. Her niece is an amiable young woman in all respects, a handsome likeness of Johnny, and with a smile so like my mother's, that in this cousin of mine she seems almost restored to me again. I would that she had better health, but she has suffered sadly in her constitution by divers causes, and especially by nursing her father in his last illness, from whose side she stirred not till he expired. Johnny, with whom I have been always delighted, is also so much in love with me that no place in the world will suit him to live in at present, except Weston. Where he lives his sister will li

likewise, and their aunt is under promise to live with them, at least till Catharine shall have attained under her tuition some competent share of skill in the art of house-keeping. They have looked at a house, the next but one to ours, and like it. You may perhaps remember it: it is an old house with *girt* casement windows, and has a fir tree in the little court in front of it. Here they purpose to settle, if Aunt Bodham, who is most affectionately attached to them all, can be persuaded not to break her heart about it. Of this there are some hopes, because, did they live in Norfolk, they would neither live with her, nor even in her neighbourhood, but at thirty miles distance. Johnny is writing to her now with a view to reconcile her to the measure, and should he succeed, the house will be hired immediately. It will please thee, I think, to know that we are likely to have our solitary situation a little enlivened, and therefore I have given thee this detail of the matter.

I told thee, I believe, that my work is to be published on the 1st of July. So Johnson purposed when I heard from him last, but whether he will so perform or not must be left to time to discover. I see not what should hinder it. He has not yet made known on what terms he will treat with me for the copy. Perhaps he will stay till he has had an opportunity in some measure to learn the world's opinion of it, to which I have no objection. I do not wish more than a just price for it, but should be sorry to take less; and there will be danger of either too much or too little till the public shall have stamped its value.

My chief distress at present is that I cannot write,

at least can write nothing that will satisfy myself. I have made once or twice a beginning, and disgusted with what I had done, have dropped it. I have a subject, and a subject for a long work,—a subject that I like, and that will suggest much poetical matter.—Mr. Buchanan gave it me, and it is called The Four Ages of Man.—But I had need to have many more ages before me unless I can write on it to better purpose.

With affectionate compliments from our guests, and with Mrs. Unwin's kindest remembrances, I remain, dearest coz,

Ever Thine,

WM. COWPER.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 26, 1791.

MANY thanks, my cousin, for the bills, which arrived safe, with all their accompaniments. Money is never unwelcome here, but at this time is especially welcome when servants' wages and house-rent call for it. Mrs. Unwin enjoins me particularly to make you her affectionate acknowledgements both for the bonnet materials and for directions how to make the bonnet.

I am glad that Johnson waited on you, and glad that he acquitted himself so well in your presence; glad too, that he likes my prose, and filled with wonder that he likes my letters, because to him I have hardly sent any but letters of jobation. I verily believe that though a bookseller, he has in him the soul of a gentleman. Such strange combinations sometimes

happen, and such a one may have happened in his instance. We shall see.

Johnny Higgins shall have his waistcoat to-morrow, together with a note in which I will tell him all that you say concerning his performance in the drawing way. Your gift will not be the less acceptable to him because, being in mourning, he cannot wear it at present. It is perfectly elegant, and he will always be, and will always have cause to be, proud of it. He mourns for his mother, who died about three weeks since, which, when I wrote last, I forgot to mention. You know, I believe, that she had ill health, and was subject to violent pains in her stomach. A fit of that sort seized her; she was attended by a nurse in the night, whom she ordered down stairs to get her some broth, and when the woman returned she was dead.

It gives us true pleasure that you interest yourself so much in the state of our turnpike. Learn then the present state of it. From Gayhurst to Weston the road is a gravel-walk, but Weston itself is at present in a chaotic condition. About three weeks since they dug up the street, and having done so, left it. But it will not continue long in such disorder, and when you see it next you will find the village wonderfully improved. Already they have filled up two abominable ponds more fœtid than any human nostrils could endure; they were to be found as you must remember, one just under Farmer Archer's window, and the other a little beyond it. Covered drains are to be made wherever drains are wanted, and the causey is to be new-laid. When all this is done and the road well gravelled, we will hold our heads as high

as any villagers in the kingdom. At the present time they are at work on the road from Weston to Olney. Olney is also itself in a state of beautification, and the road between Olney and Bedford is, I believe, nearly finished, but that I have never seen. The sooner you come to look at these things with your own eyes, the better.

I have hardly left myself room to tell you a story which yet I must tell, but as briefly as possible. While I reposed myself yesterday evening in the shop of Mr. Palmer, lying at my length on the counter, a labouring man came in. He wanted a hat for his boy, and having bought one at two shillings, said he must have a handkerchief for himself, a silk one, to wear about his neck on Sundays. After much bargaining he suited himself with one at last for four shillings and sixpence. I liked the man's looks, and having just one shilling in my purse, I held it to him, saying: Here, honest friend, here's something towards paying for your purchase! He took the shilling and looked at me steadily for a long time, saying nothing. At last his surprise burst forth in these words—I never saw such a gentleman in my life! He then faced about, and was again for a long time silent; but at last, turning to me again he said—If I had known you had been so stout I would have had a better. Mr. Andrews told him that the cutting off would make no difference to him, and he might have a better if he pleased, so he took one at the price of five shillings, and went away all astonishment at my great bounty. I have learned since that he is a very worthy industrious fellow, and has a mother between seventy

and eighty, who walks every Sunday eight miles to hearing, as they call it, and back again. This is another instance that my skill in physiognomy never deceives me.

Adieu, my dearest coz. With the love of all here, I remain

Ever thine,

WM. COWPER.

P. S. Since I heard of Mrs. Madan's death I have thought much of her daughter Sally, and rejoice to hear that she is at last provided for.—We packed the drawings as well as we could, but the band-box was old and crazy; and was crushed, I suppose, in the hamper. I sent them that you might get them framed at your best leisure, for here we cannot frame them.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, June 28, 1790.

I WRITE now merely to tell you that the tea came safe, and is excellent, for which you have my best thanks;—and to entreat you to send forthwith either in a Bank note or draft on your own bank, the money you have in hand for me. It is the season of payment of servants' wages, and we are liable also, or shall be shortly, to some demands of rent, which will make the receipt of said money very convenient.

We proceed much in the usual rate, only Mrs. Unwin's constant pain in her side has at last produced a tumour on that part, which distresses me more than

it does her. Knowing neither the cause, nor in what it is likely to terminate, I cannot but be very uneasy about it. It has but lately appeared; as she describes it, it is half a hand's breadth in dimension, and projects to about a hand's thickness. If you should happen to see your skilful apothecary, whose name I cannot now recover, but whom Mr. Rose consulted, I should be glad if you would ask his opinion. In the mean time I shall take the first opportunity to consult Mr. Gregson.

I expect to see shortly Mrs. Bodham here and her husband. If they come, which depends on the recovery of a relation of theirs, at present very much indisposed, they will stay, I imagine, a parson's week, that is to say, about a fortnight and no longer. September in the mean time will be approaching, and will arrive welcome, most welcome to us, because it promises to bring you with it. I dreamed last night that you are at Bath: your next will inform me whether this is true or false. My dream was owing perhaps merely to your longer silence than usual, for which not knowing how to account while I am waking, I endeavoured to solve the difficulty in my sleep.

Adieu! Let me hear from thee, and believe me, as I know thou dost, with Mrs. Unwin's affectionate compliments,

Ever thine,

WM. COWPER.

The swelling is under the ribs at the side of the stomach, on the right.

TO MRS. BODHAM[1].

MY DEAREST COUSIN, Weston Underwood, July 7, 1791.

MOST true it is, however strange, that on the twenty-fifth of last month I wrote you a long letter, and verily thought I had sent it. But opening my desk the day before yesterday, there I found it. Such a memory have I,—a good one never, but at present worse than usual, my head being filled with the cares of publication, and the bargain that I am making with my bookseller.

I am sorry that through this forgetfulness of mine you were disappointed, otherwise should not at all regret that my letter never reached you; for it consisted principally of such reasons as I could muster to induce you to consent to a favourite measure to which you have consented without them. Your kindness, and self-denying disinterestedness on this occasion have endeared you to us all, if possible, still the more, and are truly worthy of the Rose that used to sit smiling on my knee, I will not say how many years ago.

Make no apologies, my dear, that thou dost not write more frequently. Write when thou canst, and I shall be satisfied. I am sensible, as I believe I have already told you, that there is an awkwardness in writing to those with whom we have hardly ever conversed, in consideration of which I feel myself not at all inclined, either to wonder at or to blame your silence. At the same time be it known to you that you must

[1] For this letter I am obliged to Mr. Worship.

not take encouragement from this my great moderation to write less frequently than you might, lest, disuse increasing the labour, you should at last write not at all.

That I should visit Norfolk at present is not possible:—I have heretofore pleaded my engagement to Homer as the reason, and a reason it was, while it subsisted, that was absolutely insurmountable. But there are still other impediments which it would neither be pleasant to me to relate, nor to you to know, and which could not well be comprised in a letter. Let it suffice for me to say, that could they be imparted, you would admit the force of them. It shall be our mutual consolation that if we cannot meet at Mattishall, at least we may meet at Weston, and that we shall meet here with double satisfaction, being now so numerous.

Your sister is well; Kitty I think better than when she came, and Johnny ails nothing, except that if he eat a little more supper than usual he is apt to be riotous in his sleep. We have an excellent physician at Northampton, whom our dear Catharine wishes to consult, and I have recommended it to Johnny to consult him at the same time. His nocturnal ailment is, I dare say, within the reach of medical advice, and because it may happen sometime or other to be very hurtful to him I heartily wish him cured of it. Light suppers and early rising perhaps might alone be sufficient;—but the latter is a difficulty that threatens not to be easily surmounted.

We are all of one mind respecting you, therefore I send the love of all, though I shall see none of the

party till breakfast calls us together. Great preparation is making in the empty house. The spiders have no rest, and hardly a web is to be seen, where lately there were thousands.

I am, my dearest cousin, with best respects to Mr. Bodham, most affectionately yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, July 11, 1791.

YOUR draft is safe in our possession, and will soon be out of it, that is to say, will soon be negotiated. Many thanks for that, and still more for your kindness in bidding me draw yet again, should I have occasion. None I hope will offer. I have a purse at Johnson's, to which, if need should arise, I can recur at pleasure. The present is rather an expensive time with us, and will probably cause the consumption of some part of my loose cash in the hands of my bookseller.

I am not much better pleased with that dealer in authors than yourself. His first proposal, which was to pay me with my own money, or in other words to get my copy for nothing, not only dissatisfied but hurt me, implying, as I thought, the meanest opinion possible of my labours. For that for which an intelligent man will give nothing, can be worth nothing. The consequence was that my spirits sank considerably below par, and have but just begun to recover themselves. His second offer, which is, to pay all expenses, and to give me a thousand pounds next midsummer, leaving the copyright still in my hands, is

more liberal. With this offer I have closed, and Mr. Rose will to-morrow clench the bargain. Josephus understands that Johnson will gain two hundred pounds by it, but I apprehend that he is mistaken, and that Mr. Rose is right, who estimates his gains at one. Mr. Hill's mistake, if he be mistaken, arises from his rating the expenses of the press at only five hundred pounds, whereas Johnson rates them at six. Be that as it may, I am contented. If he gains two, I shall not grudge, and if he gains but one, considering all things, I think he will gain enough.

As to Sephus' scheme of signing the seven hundred copies in order to prevent a clandestine multiplication of them, at the same time that I feel the wisdom of it, I feel also an unsurmountable dislike of it. It would be calling Johnson a knave, and telling the public that I think him one. Now, though I do not perhaps think so highly of his liberality as some people do, and I was once myself disposed to think, yet I have no reason at present to charge him with dishonesty. I must even take my chance, as other poets do, and if I am wronged, must comfort myself with what somebody has said,—that authors are the natural prey of booksellers.

You judge right in supposing that I pity the King and Queen of France. I can truly say, that, except the late melancholy circumstances of our own, (when our sovereign had lost his senses, and his wife was almost worried out of hers,) no royal distresses have ever moved me so much. And still I pity them, prisoners as they are now for life, and since their late unsuccessful attempt, likely to be treated more scur-

vily than ever. Heaven help them, for in their case, all other help seems vain.

The establishment of our guests at Weston is given up; not for any impediment thrown in the way by Mrs. Bodham, for she consented with the utmost disinterestedness, to the measure, but because on surveying accurately the house in which they must have dwelt, it was found to be so mere a ruin that it would have cost its value to make it habitable. They could only take it from year to year, for which reason the landlord would do nothing.

Many thanks for the Mediterranean hint; but unless I were a better historian than I am, there would be no proportion between the theme and my ability. It seems indeed not to be so properly a subject for one poem as for a dozen.

I was pleased with Bouillie's letter, or to say truth, rather with the principles by which it was dictated. The letter itself seems too much the language of passion, and can only be cleared of the charge of extravagance by the accomplishment of its denunciations, —an event, I apprehend, not much to be expected.

We are all well except poor Catharine, who yesterday consulted Dr. Kerr, and to-day is sick of his prescription. Our affectionate hearts all lay themselves at your pettitoes, and with Mrs. Unwin's best remembrances, I remain, for my own peculiar, most entirely thine,

WM. COWPER.

The Frogs are expected here on Wednesday.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL, BRIGHTON, SUSSEX.

MY DEAR MR. BULL, Weston, July 27, 1791.

MINDFUL of my promise I take the pen, though fearing, and with reason enough, that the performance will be hardly worth the postage. Such as it is however, here it comes, and if you like it not, you must thank yourself for it.

I have blest myself on your account that you are at Brighton and not at Birmingham, where it seems they are so loyal and so pious that they show no mercy to dissenters. How can you continue in a persuasion so offensive to the wise and good! Do you not yet perceive that the Bishops themselves hate you not more than the very blacksmith of the establishment, and will you not endeavour to get the better of your aversion to red-nosed singing men and organs? Come—be received into the bosom of mother-church, so shall you never want a jig for your amusement on Sundays, and shall save perhaps your academy from a conflagration.

As for me, I go on at the old rate, giving all my time to Homer, who I suppose was a Presbyterian too, for I understand that the church of England will by no means acknowledge him as one of hers. He, I say, has all my time, except a little that I give every day to no very cheering prospects of futurity. I would I were a Hottentot, or even a dissenter, so that my views of an hereafter were more comfortable. But such as I am, hope, if it please God, may visit even me; and should we ever meet again, possibly we may part no more. Then, if Presbyterians ever find the way to heaven, you and I may know each other in

[illegible] world, and rejoice in the recital of the ter-
[illegible] things that we endured in this. I will wager
[illegible] with you now, that when that day comes, you
[illegible] acknowledge my story a more wonderful one
[illegible] yours,—only order your executors to put sixpence
[illegible] your mouth when they bury you, that you may
[illegible] wherewithal to pay me.

I have received a long letter from an unknown
somebody, filled with the highest eulogiums on my
Homer. This has raised my spirits and is the true
cause of all the merriment with which I have greeted
you this morning. Pardon me, as Vellum says in the
Comedy, for being jocular. Mrs. Unwin joins me in
love to yourself and your very good son, and we both
hope and both sincerely wish to hear of Mrs. Bull's
recovery.

Yours affectionately,
WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston, Aug. 2, 17[illegible]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS much obliged, and still [illegible]
obliged to Lady Bagot, for [illegible]
[illegible] I have [illegible]
[illegible]

lity. When the servant told me that Lady Bagot was in the parlour, I felt my spirits sink ten degrees; but the moment I saw her, at least when I had been a minute in her company, I felt them rise again, and they soon rose even above their former pitch. I know two ladies of fashion now, whose manners have this effect upon me. The Lady in question, and the Lady Spencer. I am a shy animal, and want much kindness to make me easy. Such I shall be to my dying day.

Here sit *I*, calling myself *shy*, yet have just published by the *by*, two great volumes of poetry.

This reminds me of Ranger's observation in the Suspicious Husband, who says to somebody, I forget whom—"*There is a degree of assurance in you modest men, that we impudent fellows can never arrive at!*"—Assurance indeed! Have you seen 'em? What do you think they are? Nothing less I can tell you than a translation of Homer. Of the sublimest poet in the world. That's all. Can I ever have the impudence to call myself shy again?

You live, I think, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham? What must you not have felt on the late alarming occasion! You I suppose could see the fires from your windows. We, who only heard the news of them, [illegible] trembled. Never sure was religious zeal more [illegible] manifested, or more to the prejudice of its

[illegible]ed. I am, with Mrs. Unwin's

Ever yours,

W. C.

that better world, and rejoice in the recital of the terrible things that we endured in this. I will wager sixpence with you now, that when that day comes, you shall acknowledge my story a more wonderful one than yours;—only order your executors to put sixpence in your mouth when they bury you, that you may have wherewithal to pay me.

I have received a long letter from an unknown somebody, filled with the highest eulogiums on my Homer. This has raised my spirits and is the true cause of all the merriment with which I have greeted you this morning. Pardon me, as Vellum says in the Comedy, for being jocular. Mrs. Unwin joins me in love to yourself and your very good son, and we both hope and both sincerely wish to hear of Mrs. Bull's recovery.

Yours affectionately,
WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Aug. 2, 1791.

I WAS much obliged, and still feel myself much obliged to Lady Bagot, for the visit with which she favoured me. Had it been possible that I could have seen Lord Bagot too, I should have been completely happy. For, as it happened, I was that morning in better spirits than usual; and though I arrived late, and after a long walk, and extremely hot, which is a circumstance very apt to disconcert me, yet I was not disconcerted half so much as I generally am at the sight of a stranger, especially of a stranger lady, and more especially at the sight of a stranger lady of qua-

lity. When the servant told me that Lady Bagot was in the parlour, I felt my spirits sink ten degrees; but the moment I saw her, at least when I had been a minute in her company, I felt them rise again, and they soon rose even above their former pitch. I know two ladies of fashion now, whose manners have this effect upon me. The Lady in question, and the Lady Spencer. I am a shy animal, and want much kindness to make me easy. Such I shall be to my dying day.

Here sit *I*, calling myself *shy*, yet have just published by the *by*, two great volumes of poe*try*.

This reminds me of Ranger's observation in the Suspicious Husband, who says to somebody, I forget whom—"*There is a degree of assurance in you modest men, that we impudent fellows can never arrive at!*"—Assurance indeed! Have you seen 'em? What do you think they are? Nothing less I can tell you than a translation of Homer. Of the sublimest poet in the world. That's all. Can I ever have the impudence to call myself shy again?

You live, I think, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham? What must you not have felt on the late alarming occasion! You I suppose could see the fires from your windows. We, who only heard the news of them, have trembled. Never sure was religious zeal more terribly manifested, or more to the prejudice of its own cause.

Adieu, my dear friend. I am, with Mrs. Unwin's best compliments,

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston Underwood, Aug. 4, 1791.

YOUR last letter, which gave us so unfavourable an account of your health, and which did not speak much more comfortably of Mr. King's, affected us with much concern. Of Dr. Raitt we may say in the words of Milton,

> His long experience did attain
> To something like prophetic strain;

for as he foretold to you, so he foretold to Mrs. Unwin, that though her disorders might not much threaten life, they would yet cleave to her to the last; and she and perfect health must ever be strangers to each other. Such was his prediction, and it has been hitherto accomplished. Either headache or pain in the side has been her constant companion ever since we had the pleasure of seeing you. As for myself, I cannot properly say that I *enjoy* a good state of health, though in general I have it, because I have it accompanied with frequent fits of dejection, to which less health and better spirits would, perhaps, be infinitely preferable. But it pleased God that I should be born in a country where melancholy is the national characteristic; and of a house more than commonly subject to it. To say truth, I have often wished myself a Frenchman.

N. B. I write this in very good spirits.

You gave us so little hope in your last that we should have your company this summer at Weston, that to repeat our invitation seems almost like teasing you. I will only say, therefore, that my Norfolk friends

having left us, of whose expected arrival here I believe I told you in a former letter, we should be happy could you succeed them. We now, indeed, expect Lady Hesketh, but not immediately: she seldom sees Weston till all its summer beauties are fled, and red brown and yellow have supplanted the universal verdure.

My Homer is gone forth, and I can devoutly say—Joy go with it! What place it holds in the estimation of the generality, I cannot tell, having heard no more about it since its publication than if no such work existed. I must except, however, an anonymous eulogium from some man of letters, which I received about a week ago. It was kind in a perfect stranger, as he avows himself to be, to relieve me, at so early a day, from much of the anxiety that I could not but feel on such an occasion. I should be glad to know who he is, only that I might thank him.

Mrs. Unwin, who is this moment come down to breakfast, joins me in affectionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King; and I am, my dear madam,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Aug. 9, 1791.

I NEVER make a correspondent wait for an answer through idleness, or want of proper respect for him; but if I am silent it is because I am busy, or not well, or because I stay till something occurs, that may make my letter at least a little better than mere blank paper.

I therefore write speedily in reply to yours, being at present neither much occupied, nor at all indisposed, nor forbidden by a dearth of materials.

I wish always when I have a new piece in hand to be as secret as you, and there was a time when I could be so. Then I lived the life of a solitary, was not visited by a single neighbour, because I had none with whom I could associate; nor ever had an inmate. This was when I dwelt at Olney; but since I have removed to Weston the case is different. Here I am visited by all around me, and study in a room exposed to all manner of inroads. It is on the ground floor, the room in which we dine, and in which I am sure to be found by all who seek me. They find me generally at my desk, and with my work, whatever it be, before me, unless perhaps I have conjured it into its hiding place before they have had time to enter. This, however, is not always the case, and consequently, sooner or later, I cannot fail to be detected. Possibly you, who I suppose have a snug study, would find it impracticable to attend to any thing closely in an apartment exposed as mine; but use has made it familiar to me, and so familiar, that neither servants going and coming disconcert me; nor even if a lady, with an oblique glance of her eye, catches two or three lines of my MS., do I feel myself inclined to blush, though naturally the shyest of mankind.

You did well, I believe, to cashier the subject of which you gave me a recital. It certainly wants those *agrémens*, which are necessary to the success of any subject in verse. It is a curious story, and so far as the poor young lady was concerned a very affecting

one; but there is a coarseness in the character of the hero, that would have spoiled all. In fact, I find it myself a much easier matter to write, than to get a convenient theme to write on.

I am obliged to you for comparing me as you go both with Pope and with Homer. It is impossible in any other way of management to know whether the Translation be well executed or not, and if well, in what degree. It was in the course of such a process, that I first became dissatisfied with Pope. More than thirty years since, and when I was a young Templar, I accompanied him with his original, line by line, through both poems. A fellow student of mine, a person of fine classic taste, joined himself with me in the labour. We were neither of us, as you may imagine, very diligent in our proper business.

I shall be glad if my reviewers, whosoever they may be, will be at the pains to read me as you do. I want no praise that I am not entitled to; but of that to which I am entitled I should be loth to lose a tittle, having worked hard to earn it.

I would heartily second the Bishop of Salisbury in recommending to you a close pursuit of your Hebrew studies, were it not that I wish you to publish what I may understand. Do both, and I shall be satisfied.

Your remarks, if I may but receive them soon enough to serve me in case of a new edition, will be extremely welcome.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, Aug. 9, 1791.

THE little that I have heard about Homer myself has been equally, or more flattering than Dr. ———'s intelligence, so that I have good reason to hope that I have not studied the old Grecian, and how to dress him, so long and so intensely, to no purpose. At present I am idle, both on account of my eyes, and because I know not to what to attach myself in particular. Many different plans and projects are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence, I hope, will direct me in my choice; for other guide I have none, nor wish for another.

God bless you, my dearest Johnny.

W. C.[1]

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, Aug. 30, 1791.

THE walls of Ogressa's chamber shall be furnished as elegantly as they can be, and at little cost; and when you see them you shall cry—Bravo! Bedding we have, but two chairs will be wanting, the servants' hall having engaged all our supernumeraries. These you will either send or give us commission to buy them. Such as will suit may be found probably at Maurice Smith's, of house-furnishing memory; and this latter course I

[1] The translation alluded to was that of the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton.

should think the best, because they are of all things most liable to fracture in a waggon.

I know not how it can have happened that Homer is such a secret at Tunbridge, for I can tell you that his fame is on the wing, and flies rapidly. Johnson, however, seems to be clear from blame; and when you recollect that the whole edition is his by purchase, and that he has no possible way to get his money again but by the sale of it, thou thyself wilt think so. A tradesman,—an old stager too, may safely be trusted with his own interest.

I have spoken big words about Homer's fame, and bigger perhaps than my intelligence will justify, for I have not heard much, but what I have heard has been pretty much to the purpose. First, little Johnny going through Cambridge, in his way home, learned from his tutor there that it had found many admirers amongst the best qualified judges of that university, and that they were very liberal of their praises. Secondly, Mr. Rye wrote me word lately that a certain candid fair critic and excellent judge, of the county of Northampton, gives it high encomiums. Thirdly, Mr. Rye came over himself from Gayhurst yesterday on purpose to tell me how much he was delighted with it. He had just been reading the sixth Iliad, and comparing it with Pope and with the original, and professed himself enchanted. Fourthly, Mr. Frog is much pleased with it; and fifthly, Henry Cowper is bewitched with it; and sixthly, so are—you and I,—*ça suffit.*

But now if thou hast the faculty of erecting thy ears, lift them into the air, first taking off thy cap, that they may have the highest possible elevation.

Mrs. Unwin says,—No, don't tell her ladyship all,—tell her only enough to raise her curiosity, that she may come the sooner to Weston to have it gratified. But I say,—Yes, I will tell her all, lest she should be overcharged and burst by the way.

The Chancellor and I, my dear, have had a correspondence on the subject of Homer. He had doubts it seems about the propriety of translating him in blank verse, and wrote to Henry to tell him so, adding a translation of his own in rhyme of the speech of Achilles to Phœnix, in the ninth book; and referring him to me, who, he said, could elevate it, and polish it, and give it the tone of Homer. Henry sent this letter to me, and I answered it in one to his lordship, but not meddling with his verses, for I remembered what happened between Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Toledo. His lordship sent me two sheets in reply, filled with arguments in favour of rhyme, which I was to answer if I could; and containing another translation of the same passage, only in blank verse, leaving it to me to give it rhyme, to make it close, and faithful, and poetical. All this I performed as best I could, and yesterday I heard from him again. In this last letter he says,—"I am clearly convinced that Homer may be best translated *without* rhyme, and that you have succeeded in the passages I have looked into."

Such is the candour of a wise man and a real scholar. I would to Heaven that all prejudiced persons were like him!—I answered this letter immediately; and here, I suppose, our correspondence ends. Have I not made a great convert? You shall see the letters, both his and mine, when you come.

My picture hangs in the study. I will not tell thee what others think of it; but thou shalt judge for thyself. I altogether approve Mrs. Carter's sentiments upon the Birmingham riots, and admire her manner of expressing them. The Frogs come down to-day, bringing Catherina with them. Mrs. Frog has caught cold, as I hear, in her journey; therefore how she may be now I know not, but before she went she was well and in excellent spirits. I rejoice that thy poor lungs can play freely, and shall be happy when they can do the same at Weston. My eyes are weak, and somewhat inflamed, and have never been well this month past.

Mrs. Unwin is tolerably well,—that is, much as usual. She joins me in best love, and in every thing that you can wish us both to feel for you.

Adieu, my dearest coz,

Ever thine,

WM. COWPER.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The Lodge, Sept. 14, 1791.

WHOEVER reviews me will in fact have a laborious task of it, in the performance of which he ought to move leisurely, and to exercise much critical discernment. In the mean time my courage is kept up by the arrival of such testimonies in my favour, as give me the greatest pleasure; coming from quarters the most respectable. I have reason therefore to hope that our periodical judges will not be very adverse to me, and that perhaps they may even favour me. If one man of taste and letters is pleased, another man so qualified

can hardly be displeased; and if critics of a different description grumble, they will not however materially hurt me.

You, who know how necessary it is to me to be employed, will be glad to hear that I have been called to a new literary engagement, and that I have not refused it. A Milton that is to rival, and if possible to exceed in splendour Boydell's Shakespeare, is in contemplation, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes; to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. I shall have years allowed me to do it in.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Sept. 21, 1791.

Of all the testimonies in favour of my Homer that I have received, none has given me so sincere a pleasure as that of Lord Bagot. It is an unmixed pleasure and without a drawback; because I know him to be perfectly, and in all respects, whether erudition or a fine taste be in question, so well qualified to judge me, that I can neither expect nor wish a sentence more valuable than his—

. . . . . εἰσόκ' ἀΰτμὴ
Ἐν στήθεσσι μένει, καὶ μοι φίλα γένατ' ορώρει.

I hope by this time you have received your volumes, and are prepared to second the applauses of your brother,—else, woe be to you! I wrote to Johnson immediately on the receipt of your last, giving him a strict

injunction to dispatch them to you without delay. He had sold some time since a hundred of the unsubscribed-for copies.

I have not a history in the world except Baker's Chronicle, and that I borrowed three years ago from Mr. Throckmorton. Now the case is this; I am translating Milton's third Elegy—his Elegy on the death of the Bishop of Winchester. He begins it with saying, that while he was sitting alone, dejected, and musing on many melancholy themes,—first, the idea of the plague presented itself to his mind, and of the havoc made by it among the great. Then he proceeds thus:

Tum memini clarique ducis, fratrisque verendi
Intempestivis ossa cremata rogis:
Et memini Heroum, quos vidit ad æthera raptos,
Flevit et amissos Belgia tota duces.

I cannot learn from my only oracle, Baker, who this famous leader and his reverend brother were. Neither does he at all ascertain for me the event alluded to in the second of these couplets. I am not yet possessed of Warton, who probably explains it, nor can be for a month to come. Consult him for me if you have him, or if you have him not consult some other;—or you may find the intelligence perhaps in your own budget; no matter how you come by it, only send it to me if you can, and as soon as you can, for I hate to leave unsolved difficulties behind me. In the first year of Charles the First, Milton was seventeen years of age, and then wrote this Elegy. The period therefore to which I would refer you, is the two or three last years of James the First. Ever yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston Underwood, Oct. 21, 1791.

You could not have sent me more agreeable news than that of your better health, and I am greatly obliged to you for making me the first of your correspondents to whom you have given that welcome intelligence. This is a favour which I should have acknowledged much sooner, had not a disorder in my eyes, to which I have always been extremely subject, required that I should make as little use of my pen as possible. I felt much for you, when I read that part of your letter in which you mention your visitors, and the fatigue which, indisposed as you have been, they could not fail to occasion you. Agreeable as you would have found them at another time, and happy as you would have been in their company, you could not but feel the addition they necessarily made to your domestic attentions as a considerable inconvenience. But I have always said, and shall never say otherwise, that if patience under adversity, and submission to the afflicting hand of God, be true fortitude,—which no reasonable person can deny,—then your sex have ten times more true fortitude to boast than ours; and I have not the least doubt that you carried yourself with infinitely more equanimity on that occasion than I should have done, or any he of my acquaintance. Why is it, since the first offender on earth was a woman, that the women are nevertheless, in all the most important points, superior to the men? That they are so, I will not allow to be disputed, having observed it ever since I was capable of making the observation. I believe,

on recollection, that when I had the happiness to see you here, we agitated this question a little; but I do not remember that we arrived at any decision of it. The Scripture calls you the *weaker vessels;* and perhaps the best solution of the difficulty, therefore, may be found in those other words of Scripture,—*My strength is perfected in weakness.* Unless you can furnish me with a better key than this, I shall be much inclined to believe that I have found the true one.

I am deep in a new literary engagement, being retained by my bookseller as editor of an intended most magnificent publication of Milton's Poetical Works. This will occupy me as much as Homer did for a year or two to come; and when I have finished it, I shall have run through all the degrees of my profession, as author, translator, and editor. I know not that a fourth could be found; but if a fourth can be found, I dare say I shall find it.

Mrs. Unwin joins me in best compliments to yourself and Mr. King, who I hope by this time has entirely recovered from the cold he had when you wrote, and from all the effects of it. I shall be happy to learn from you that you have had no more attacks of your most painful disorder in the stomach, and remain in the mean time, my dear madam, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

W. C.

TO CLOTWORTHY ROWLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR ROWLEY, Weston Underwood, Oct. 22, 1791.

How often am I to be mortified by hearing that you have been within sixty miles of me, and have taken your flight again to an immeasurable distance? Will you never in one of these excursions to England, (three of which at least you have made since we have had intercourse by letter,)—will you never find your way to Weston? Consider that we are neither of us immortal, and that if we do not contrive to meet before we are fifty years older, our meeting in this world at least will be an affair altogether hopeless; for by that time your travelling days will be over, as mine have been these many years.

I often think of Carr, and shall always think of him with affection. Should I never see him more, I shall never, I trust, be capable of forgetting his indefatigable attention to me during the last year I spent in London. Two years after I invited him to Huntingdon, where I lived at that time, but he pleaded some engagement, and I have neither seen him nor heard of him, except from yourself, from that hour to the present. I know by experience with what reluctance we move when we have been long fixed; but could he prevail on himself to move hither he would make me very happy; and when you write to him next you may tell him so.

I have to tell you in answer to your question, what I am doing,—that I am preparing to appear in a new character, not as an author, but as an editor;—

editor of Milton's Poetical Works, which are about to be published in a more splendid style than ever yet. My part of the business is to translate the Latin and Italian pieces, to settle the text, to select notes from others, and to write notes of my own. At present the translation employs me; when that shall be finished, I must begin to read all the books that I can scrape together, of which either Milton or his works are the subject; and that done shall proceed to my commentary. Few people have studied Milton more, or are more familiar with his poetry, than myself; but I never looked into him yet with the eyes of an annotator: therefore whether I may expect much or little difficulty, I know no more than you do, but I shall be occupied in the business, no doubt, these two years. Fuseli is to be the painter, and will furnish thirty capital pictures to the engraver.

I have little poems in plenty, but nothing that I can send to Ireland, unless you could put me into a way of conveying them thither at free cost, for should you be obliged to pay for them, *le jeu ne vaudra pas les chandelles.*

I rejoice that your family are all well, and in every thing that conduces to your happiness. Adieu, my good, old, and valued friend; permit me to thank you once more for your kind services in the matter of my subscription,

And believe me most truly yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Oct. 25, 1791.

YOUR unexpected and transient visit, like every thing else that is past, has now the appearance of a dream; but it was a pleasant one, and I heartily wish that such dreams could recur more frequently. Your brother Chester repeated his visit yesterday, and I never saw him in better spirits. At such times he has, now and then, the very look that he had when he was a boy; and when I see it, I seem to be a boy myself, and entirely forget for a short moment the years that have intervened since I was one. The look that I mean is one that you, I dare say, have observed.—Then we are at Westminster again. He left with me that poem of your brother Lord Bagot's, which was mentioned when you were here. It was a treat to me, and I read it to my cousin Lady Hesketh and to Mrs. Unwin, to whom it was a treat also. It has great sweetness of numbers, and much elegance of expression, and is just such a poem as I should be happy to have composed myself about a year ago, when I was loudly called upon by a certain nobleman, to celebrate the beauties of his villa. But I had two insurmountable difficulties to contend with. One was, that I had never seen his villa; and the other, that I had no eyes at that time for any thing but Homer. Should I at any time hereafter undertake the task, I shall now at least know how to go about it, which, till I had seen Lord Bagot's poem, I verily did not. I was particularly charmed with the parody of those beautiful lines of Milton.

" The song was partial, but the harmony———
(What could it less, when spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience."

There's a parenthesis for you! The parenthesis it seems is out of fashion, and perhaps the moderns are in the right to proscribe what they cannot attain to. I will answer for it that, had we the art at this day of insinuating a sentiment in this graceful manner, no reader of taste would quarrel with the practice. Lord Bagot showed his by selecting the passage for his imitation.

I would beat Warton if he were living, for supposing that Milton ever repented of his compliment to the memory of Bishop Andrews. I neither do, nor can, nor will believe it. Milton's mind could not be narrowed by any thing; and though he quarrelled with episcopacy in the church of England idea of it, I am persuaded that a good bishop, as well as any other good man, of whatsoever rank or order, had always a share of his veneration.

Yours, my dear friend,
Very affectionately,
W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOHNNY, Weston, Oct. 31, 1791.

YOUR kind and affectionate letter well deserves my thanks, and should have had them long ago, had I not been obliged lately to give my attention to a mountain

of unanswered letters, which I have just now reduced to a molehill; yours lay at the bottom, and I have at last worked my way down to it.

It gives me great pleasure that you have found a house to your minds. May you all three be happier in it than the happiest that ever occupied it before you! But my chief delight of all is to learn that you and Kitty are so completely cured of your long and threatening maladies. I always thought highly of Dr. Kerr, but his extraordinary success in your two instances has even inspired me with an affection for him.

My eyes are much better than when I wrote last, though seldom perfectly well many days together. At this season of the year I catch perpetual colds, and shall continue to do so, till I have got the better of that tenderness of habit with which the summer never fails to affect me.

I am glad that you have heard well of my work in your country. Sufficient proofs have reached me from various quarters, that I have not ploughed the field of Troy in vain.

Were you here I would gratify you with an enumeration of particulars; but since you are not, it must content you to be told, that I have every reason to be satisfied.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, in her letter to cousin Balls, made mention of my new engagement. I have just entered on it, and therefore can at present say little about it.

It is a very creditable one in itself; and may I but acquit myself of it with sufficiency, it will do me honour.

The commentator's part however is a new one to me, and one that I little thought to appear in.

Remember your promise, that I shall see you in the spring.

The Hall has been full of company ever since you went, and at present my Catharina is there singing and playing like an angel.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 14, 1791.

I HAVE waited and wished for your opinion with the feelings that belong to the value I have for it, and am very happy to find it so favourable. In my table-drawer I treasure up a bundle of suffrages, sent me by those of whose approbation I was most ambitious, and shall presently insert yours among them.

I know not why we should quarrel with compound epithets; it is certain at least they are as agreeable to the genius of our language as to that of the Greek, which is sufficiently proved by their being admitted into our common and colloquial dialect. Black-eyed, nut-brown, crook-shanked, hump-backed, are all compound epithets, and, together with a thousand other such, are used continually, even by those who profess a dislike to such combinations in poetry. Why then do they treat with so much familiarity a thing that they say disgusts them? I doubt if they could give this question a reasonable answer; unless they should answer it by confessing themselves unreasonable.

I have made a considerable progress in the translation of Milton's Latin poems. I give them, as opportunity offers, all the variety of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhyme, some in stanzas, some in seven, and some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse. They will all together, I hope, make an agreeable miscellany for the English reader. They are certainly good in themselves, and cannot fail to please, but by the fault of their translator.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston Underwood, Dec. 5, 1791.

YOUR last brought me two cordials; for what can better deserve that name than the cordial approbation of two such readers as your brother, the bishop, and your good friend and neighbour, the clergyman? The former I have ever esteemed and honoured with the justest cause, and am as ready to honour and esteem the latter as you can wish me to be, and as his virtues and talents deserve. Do I hate a parson? Heaven forbid! I love you all when you are good for any thing; and as to the rest, I would mend them if I could, and that is the worst of my intentions towards them.

I heard above a month since, that this first edition of my work was at that time nearly sold. It will not therefore, I presume, be long before I must go to press again. This I mention merely from an earnest desire

to avail myself of all other strictures that either your good neighbour, Lord Bagot, the bishop, or yourself,

παντων ἐκπαγλόταϯ' ἀνδρων,

may happen to have made, and will be so good as to favour me with. Those of the good Evander contained in your last have served me well, and I have already, in the three different places referred to, accommodated the text to them. And this I have done in one instance even a little against the bias of my own opinion.

. . . . . ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕλωμαι
Ἑλθὼν σὺν πλεόνεσσι.

The sense I had given of these words is the sense in which an old scholiast has understood them, as appears in Clarke's note *in loco*. Clarke indeed prefers the other, but it does not appear plain to me that he does it with good reason against the judgement of a very ancient commentator, and a Grecian. And I am the rather inclined to this persuasion, because Achilles himself seems to have apprehended that Agamemnon would not content himself with Briseïs only, when he says,

But I have OTHER precious things on board,
Of THESE take NONE away without my leave, &c.

It is certain that the words are ambiguous, and that the sense of them depends altogether on the punctuation. But I am always under the correction of so able a critic as your neighbour, and have altered, as I say, my version, accordingly.

As to Milton, the die is cast. I am engaged, have

bargained with Johnson, and cannot recede. I should otherwise have been glad to do as you advise, to make the translation of his Latin and Italian, part of another volume; for, with such an addition, I have nearly as much verse in my budget as would be required for the purpose. This squabble, in the mean time between Fuseli and Boydell, does not interest me at all; let it terminate as it may, I have only to perform my job, and leave the event to be decided by the combatants.

Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem.

Adieu, my dear friend, I am most sincerely yours,

W. C.

Why should you suppose that I did not admire the poem you showed me? I did admire it, and told you so, but you carried it off in your pocket, and so doing left me to forget it, and without the means of inquiry.

I am thus nimble in answering, merely with a view to ensure myself the receipt of other remarks in time for a new impression.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

DEAR SIR, Weston, Dec. 10, 1791.

I AM much obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work rather than in translation. To tell you the truth, I am of your mind; and unless I could find another Homer, I shall promise (I

believe) and vow, when I have done with Milton, never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian; and consequently I am happy, and feel myself honourably employed whatever I do for Milton. I am now translating his *Epitaphium Damonis*, a pastoral in my judgement equal to any of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pleased him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously. But he who never saw any beauty in a rural scene, was not likely to have much taste for a pastoral. *In pace quiescat!*

I was charmed with your friendly offer to be my advocate with the public; should I want one, I know not where I could find a better. The reviewer in the Gentleman's Magazine grows more and more civil. Should he continue to sweeten at this rate, as he proceeds, I know not what will become of all the little modesty I have left. I have availed myself of some of his strictures, for I wish to learn from every body.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MR DEAR FRIEND, The Lodge, Dec. 21, 1791.

It grieves me, after having indulged a little hope that I might see you in the holidays, to be obliged to disappoint myself. The occasion too is such as will ensure me your sympathy.

On Saturday last, while I was at my desk near the window, and Mrs. Unwin at the fireside, opposite to it, I heard her suddenly exclaim, "Oh! Mr. Cowper,

don't let me fall!" I turned and saw her actually falling, together with her chair, and started to her side just in time to prevent her. She was seized with a violent giddiness, which lasted, though with some abatement, the whole day, and was attended too with some other very, very alarming symptoms. At present however she is relieved from the vertigo, and seems in all respects better.

She has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has them, and will have them as long as she wants them; which will probably be, at the best, a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it. Another such a stroke upon her would, I think, overset me completely; but at present I hold up bravely.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Jan. 1, 1792.

WHAT you call a note I call a letter, and a very kind one, and as such entitled to my grateful acknowledgments. You must receive a note *indeed* in return, for more I shall not be able to afford you at present, but I write to relieve you from a part at least of your friendly anxiety on our account.

Mrs. Unwin is better, and I hope gathers strength daily. She rises not much later than her usual hour, and sits up till about eight in the evening, but does not yet leave her chamber.

You have learned, I suppose, from Mr. Bean the manner in which this illness seized her. Nothing could be more sudden or alarming. She would have fallen to the floor, if I had not sprang to her help, for while I was writing at the other side of the room, she called to me to save her from falling. She seemed to have lost for a few moments all use of her limbs from the waist downward, for it was with the utmost difficulty that I replaced her in her seat, having caught her in the moment when she was sliding from it. It was a violent vertigo that seized her brain, and disturbed her sight so much that for a day or two she saw objects inverted.

I thank God—no symptoms of the paralytic kind remain. Her senses were never affected, but her speech acquired a rapidity which would not allow it to be perfectly distinct. She has however now nearly regained her usual utterance, and will, I hope, soon resume her place in the study, and all her former functions in the family.

It was a fortnight yesterday since she was taken with this illness. You would not have received your first notice of it from Mr. Bean, had I not during the first week found myself incapable of writing, and abstained from it during the second with a design of communicating to you the news of her indisposition and of her recovery both together.

Cætera desunt.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston Underwood, Jan. 26, 1792.

SILENT as I have long been, I have had but too good a reason for being so. About six weeks since, Mrs. Unwin was seized with a sudden and alarming disorder, a vertigo, which would have thrown her out of her chair to the ground, had I not been quick enough to catch her while she was falling. For some moments her knees and ancles were so entirely disabled, that she had no use of them; and it was with the exertion of all my strength that I replaced her in her seat. Many days she kept her bed, and for some weeks her chamber; but, at length, has joined me again in the study. Her recovery has been extremely slow, and she is still feeble; but, I thank God, not so feeble but that I hope for her perfect restoration as the spring advances. I am persuaded that, with your feelings for your friends, you will know how to imagine what I must have suffered on an occasion so distressing, and to pardon a silence owing to such a cause.

The account you give me of the patience with which a lady of your acquaintance has lately endured the terrible operation of having her breast laid open, is a strong proof that your sex surpasses ours in heroic fortitude. I call it by that name, because I verily believe that, in God's account, there is more true heroism in suffering his will with meek submission, than in doing our own, or that of our fellow-mortals who may have a right to command us, with the utmost valour that was ever exhibited in a field of battle. Renown and glory are, in general, the incitements to such exertions; but no laurels are to be won by sitting patiently under the knife of a surgeon.

The virtue is, therefore, of a less suspicious character; the principle of it more simple, and the practice more difficult:—considerations that seem sufficiently to warrant my opinion, that the infallible Judge of human conduct may possibly behold with more complacency a suffering, than an active courage.

I forgot if I told you that I am engaged for a new edition of Milton's Poems. In fact, I have still other engagements; and so various, that I hardly know to which of them all to give my first attentions. I have only time, therefore, to condole with you on the double loss you have lately sustained, and to congratulate you on being female; because, as such, you will, I trust, acquit yourself well under so severe a trial.

Mrs. Unwin's affectionate respects united with mine attend yourself and Mr. King, and I remain, my dear madam, most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston Underwood, Feb. 14, 1792.

IT is the only advantage I believe that they who love each other derive from living at a distance, that the news of such ills as may happen to either seldom reaches the other till the cause of complaint is over. Had I been your next neighbour I should have suffered with you during the whole indisposition of your two children, and your own. As it is, I have nothing to do but to rejoice in your own recovery and theirs, which I do sincerely, and wish only to learn from yourself that it is complete.

I thank you for suggesting the omission of the line due to the helmet of Achilles. How the omission happened I know not, whether by my fault or the printer's; it is certain however that I had translated it, and I have now given it its proper place.

I purpose to keep back a second edition, till I have had an opportunity to avail myself of the remarks both of friends and strangers. The ordeal of criticism still awaits me in the reviews, and probably they will all in their turn mark many things that may be mended. By the Gentleman's Magazine I have already profited in several instances. My reviewer there, though favourable in the main, is a pretty close observer, and though not always right, is often so.

In the affair of Milton I will have no *horrida bella*, if I can help it. It is at least my present purpose to avoid them if possible. For which reason, unless I should soon see occasion to alter my plan, I shall confine myself merely to the business of an annotator, which is my proper province, and shall sift out of Warton's notes every tittle that relates to the private character, political or religious principles of my author. These are properly subjects for a biographer's handling, but by no means, as it seems to me, for a commentator's.

In answer to your question if I have had a correspondence with the Chancellor—I reply—yes. We exchanged three or four letters on the subject of Homer, or rather on the subject of my Preface. He was doubtful whether or not my preference of blank verse, as affording opportunity for a closer version, was well founded. On this subject he wished to be

convinced; defended rhyme with much learning, and much shrewd reasoning, but at last allowed me the honour of the victory, expressing himself in these words:—*I am clearly convinced that Homer may be best rendered in blank verse, and you have succeeded in the passages that I have looked into.*

Thus it is when a wise man differs in opinion. Such a man will be candid; and conviction, not triumph, will be his object.

Adieu!—The hard name I gave you I take to myself, and am your

ἐκπαγλότατος,

W. C.

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

A LETTER reached me yesterday from Henry Cowper, enclosing another from your Lordship to himself, of which a passage in my work formed the subject. It gave me the greatest pleasure; your strictures are perfectly just, and here follows the speech of Achilles accommodated to them * * * * * *

I did not expect to find your Lordship on the side of rhyme, remembering well with how much energy and interest I have heard you repeat passages from the Paradise Lost, which you could not have recited as you did, unless you had been perfectly sensible of their music. It comforts me therefore to know that if you have an ear for rhyme, you have an ear for blank verse also.

It seems to me that I may justly complain of rhyme

as an inconvenience in translation, even though I assert in the sequel that to me it has been easier to rhyme than to write without, because I always suppose a rhyming translator to ramble, and always obliged to do so. Yet I allow your Lordship's version of this speech of Achilles to be very close, and closer much than mine. But I believe that should either your Lordship or I give them burnish or elevation, your lines would be found, in measure as they acquired stateliness, to have lost the merit of fidelity. In which case nothing more would be done than Pope has done already.

I cannot ask your Lordship to proceed in your strictures, though I should be happy to receive more of them. Perhaps it is possible that when you retire into the country, you may now and then amuse yourself with my translation. Should your remarks reach me, I promise faithfully that they shall be all most welcome, not only as yours, but because I am sure my work will be the better for them.

With sincere and fervent wishes for your Lordship's health and happiness,

I remain, my Lord, &c.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

FROM LORD THURLOW.

DEAR COWPER,

On coming to town this morning, I was surprised particularly at receiving from you an answer to a scrawl I sent Harry, which I have forgot too much to resume

now. But I think I could not mean to patronise rhyme. I have fancied that it was introduced to mark the measure in modern languages, because they are less numerous and metrical than the ancient; and the name seems to import as much. Perhaps there was melody in ancient song, without straining it to musical notes; as the common Greek pronunciation is said to have had the compass of five parts of an octave. But surely that word is only figuratively applied to modern poetry: euphony seems to be the highest term it will bear. I have fancied also, that euphony is an impression derived a good deal from habit, rather than suggested by nature: therefore in some degree accidental, and consequently conventional. Else why can't we bear a drama with rhyme; or the French, one without it? Suppose the Rape of the Lock, Windsor Forest, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, and many other little poems which please, stripped of the rhyme, which might easily be done, would they please as well? It would be unfair to treat rondeaus, ballads, and odes in the same manner, because rhyme makes in some sort a part of the conceit. It was this way of thinking which made me suppose that habitual prejudice would miss the rhyme; and that neither Dryden or Pope would have dared to give their great authors in blank verse.

I wondered to hear you say you thought rhyme easier in original compositions; but you explained it, that you could go further a-field, if you were pushed for want of a rhyme. An expression preferred for the sake of the rhyme looks as if it were worth more than you allow. But to be sure in translation the necessity of rhyme imposes very heavy fetters upon those who

mean translation, not paraphrase. Our common heroic metre is enough,—the pure iambic, bearing only a sparing introduction of spondees, trochees, &c. to vary the measure.

Mere translation I take to be impossible, if no metre were required. But the difference of the iambic and heroic measure destroys that at once. It is also impossible to obtain the same sense from a dead language, and an ancient author, which those of his own time and country conceived; words and phrases contract, from time and use, such strong shades of difference from their original import. In a living language, with the familiarity of a whole life, it is not easy to conceive truly the actual sense of current expressions, much less of older authors. No two languages furnish *equipollent* words; their phrases differ, their syntax and their idioms still more widely. But a translation strictly so called requires an exact conformity in all those particulars, and also in numbers: therefore it is impossible. I really think at present, notwithstanding the opinion expressed in your Preface, that a translator asks himself a good question, How would my author have expressed the sentence, I am turning, in English? for every idea conveyed in the original should be expressed in English, as literally and fully as the genius and use and character of the language will admit of.

In the passage before us *αττα* was the fondling expression of childhood to its parent; and to those who first translated the lines conveyed feelingly that amiable sentiment. Γεραιε expressed the reverence which naturally accrues to age.

Διοτρεφης implies an history. Hospitality was an article of religion, strangers were supposed to be sent by God, and honoured accordingly. Jove's altar was placed in ξενοδοχειον. Phœnix had been describing that as his situation in the court of Peleus: and his Διοτρεφες refers to it.—But you must not translate that literally—

"Old daddy Phœnix, a God-send for us to maintain."

Precious limbs was at first an expression of great feeling; till vagabonds, draymen, &c. brought upon it the character of coarseness and ridicule.

It would run to great length, if I were to go through this one speech thus—this is enough for an example of my idea, and to prove the necessity of further deviation; which still is departing from the author, and justifiable only by strong necessity, such as should not be admitted, till the sense of the original had been laboured to the utmost, and been found irreducible.

I will end this by giving you the strictest translation I can invent, leaving you the double task of bringing it closer, and of polishing it into the style of poetry.

Ah! Phœnix, aged Father, guest of Jove!
I relish no such honours: for my hope
Is to be honour'd by Jove's fated will,
Which keeps me close beside these sable ships,
Long as the breath shall in my bosom stay,
Or as my precious knees retain their spring.
Further I say,—and cast it in your mind!
Melt not my spirit down by weeping thus,
And wailing, only for that great man's sake,
Atrides: neither ought you love that man,
Lest I should hate the friend, I love so well.

With me united 'tis your nobler part
To gall his spirit, who has galled mine.
With me reign equal, half my honours share.
These will report; stay you here, and repose
On a soft bed; and with the beaming morn
Consult we, whether to go home, or stay.

I have thought that *hero* has contracted a different sense than it had in Homer's time, and is better rendered *great man:* but I am aware that the encliticks and other little words, falsely called expletives, are not introduced even so much as the genius of our language would admit. The euphony I leave entirely to you.

Adieu!

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

We are of one mind as to the agreeable effect of rhyme or euphony in the lighter kinds of poetry. The pieces which your Lordship mentions would certainly be spoiled by the loss of it, and so would all such. The Alma would lose all its neatness and smartness, and Hudibras all its humour. But in grave poems of extreme length I apprehend that the case is different. Long before I thought of commencing poet myself, I have complained and heard others complain of the wearisomeness of such poems. Not that I suppose that tædium the effect of rhyme itself, but rather of the perpetual recurrence of the same pause and cadence, unavoidable in the English couplet.

I hope I may say truly, it was not in a spirit of presumption that I undertook to do what, in your

Lordship's opinion, neither Dryden or Pope would have dared to do. On the contrary, I see not how I could have escaped that imputation, had I followed Pope in his own way. A closer translation was called for. I verily believed that rhyme had betrayed Pope into *his* deviations. For me therefore to have used his mode of versifying, would have been to expose myself to the same miscarriage, at the same time that I had not his talents to atone for it.

I agree with your Lordship that a translation perfectly close is impossible, because time has sunk the original strict import of a thousand phrases, and we have no means of recovering it. But if we cannot be unimpeachably faithful, that is no reason why we should not be as faithful as we can; and if blank verse afford the fairest chance, then it claims the preference.

Your Lordship, I will venture to say, can command me nothing in which I will not obey with the greatest alacrity.

Εἰ δύναμαι τέλεσαι γε και ἐι τετελέσμενον εστι.

But when, having made as close a translation as even you can invent, you enjoin me to make it still closer, and in rhyme too, I can only reply, as Horace to Augustus,

. . . . . *cupidum, pater optime, vires*
Deficiunt . . . . . .

I have not treacherously departed from my pattern that I might seem to give some proof of the justness of my own opinion, but have fairly and honestly adhered as closely to it as I could. Yet your Lordship will not have to compliment me on my success, either

in respect of the poetical merit of many lines, or of their fidelity. They have just enough of each to make them deficient in the other.

Oh Phœnix, father, friend, guest sent from Jove!
Me no such honours as they yield can move,
For I expect my honours from above.
Here Jove has fix'd me; and while breath and sense
Have place within me, I will never hence.
Hear too, and mark me well—Haunt not mine ears
With sighs, nor seek to melt me with thy tears
For yonder chief, lest urging such a plea
Through love of him, thou hateful prove to me.
Thy friendship for thy friend shall brighter shine
Wounding his spirit who has wounded mine.
Divide with me the honours of my throne—
These shall return, and make their tidings known:
But go not thou!—thy couch shall here be dress'd
With softest fleeces for thy easy rest,
And with the earliest blush of opening day
We will consult to seek our home, or stay.

Since I wrote these I have looked at Pope's. I am certainly somewhat closer to the original than he, but further I say not.—I shall wait with impatience for your Lordship's conclusions from these premises, and remain in the mean time with great truth,

My Lord, &c.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

FROM LORD THURLOW.

DEAR COWPER,

I HAVE received your letter on my journey through London, and as the chaise waits I shall be short.

I did not mean it as a sign of any presumption that

you have attempted what neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared; but merely as a proof of their addiction to rhyme; for I am clearly convinced that Homer may be better translated than into rhyme, and that you have succeeded in the places I have looked into. But I have fancied that it might have been still more literal, preserving the ease of genuine English and melody, and some degree of that elevation which Homer derives from simplicity. But I could not do it, or even near enough to form a judgement, or more than a fancy about it. Nor do I fancy it could be done "*stans pede in uno.*" But when the mind has been fully impregnated with the original passage, often revolving it and waiting for a happy moment may still be necessary to the best trained mind.

Adieu.

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

I HAUNT you with letters, but will trouble you now with a short line only to tell your Lordship how happy I am that any part of my work has pleased you.—I have a comfortable consciousness that the whole has been executed with equal industry and attention; and am, my Lord, with many thanks to you for snatching such a hasty moment to write to me,

Your Lordship's obliged and affectionate
humble servant,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 20, 1792.

WHEN I wrote the lines in question, I was, as I almost always am, so pressed for time, that I was obliged to put them down in a great hurry. Perhaps I printed them wrong. If a full stop be made at the end of the second line, the appearance of inconsistency, perhaps, will vanish: but should you still think them liable to that objection, they may be altered thus:—

In vain to live from age to age
We modern bards endeavour;
But write in Patty's book one page,
You gain your point for ever.

Trifling enough, I readily confess they are; but I have always allowed myself to trifle occasionally; and on this occasion had not, nor have at present, time to do more. By the way, should you think this amended copy worthy to displace the former, I must wait for some future opportunity to send you them properly transcribed for the purpose.

It is rather singular that the same post which brought me yours in which you express your disapprobation of this trifle, as such, brought me likewise a request from a very pious lady that I would write for her a copy of verses on a pen stolen by a niece of hers, from the Prince of Wales' standish. I am obliged to comply, and consequently must trifle again;—and thus it fares with poets by profession. Our wits are not at our own command, but must of necessity be sometimes directed to such subjects, not as we should choose for ourselves, but as our friends are pleased to choose for us.

Your demand of more original composition from me, will, if I live, and it please God to afford me health, in all probability be sooner or later gratified. In the mean time, you need not,—and if you turn the matter in your thoughts a little, you will perceive that you need not,—think me unworthily employed in preparing a new edition of Milton. His two principal poems are of a kind that call for an editor who believes the gospel, and is well grounded in all evangelical doctrine. Such an editor they have never had yet, though only such a one can be qualified for the office.

We mourn for the mismanagement at Botany Bay, and foresee the issue. The Romans were, in their origin, banditti; and if they became in time masters of the world, it was not by drinking grog, and allowing themselves in all sorts of licentiousness. The African colonization, and the manner of conducting it, has long been matter to us of pleasing speculation. God has highly honoured Mr. Thornton; and I doubt not that the subsequent history of the two settlements will strikingly evince the superior wisdom of his proceedings.

I write now in a hurry not to be easily conceived, and am this moment called to breakfast. Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, is still recovering, though still slowly. She unites with me in affectionate remembrances to yourself and Miss Catlett, and Lady Hesketh adds her compliments. Adieu, my dear friend.

I am most truly yours,

WM. COWPER.

Many thanks for a barrel of oysters, which came,

notwithstanding the late warm weather, perfectly sweet and good.

P. S. Lady Hesketh made the same objection to my verses as you; but she being a lady-critic, I did not heed her. As they stand at present, however, they are hers; and I believe you will think them much improved.

My heart bears me witness how glad I shall be to see you at the time you mention; and Mrs. Unwin says the same.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Feb. 21, 1792.

My obligations to you on the score of your kind and friendly remarks demanded from me a much more expeditious acknowledgment of the numerous pacquets that contained them; but I have been hindered by many causes, each of which you would admit as a sufficient apology, but none of which I will mention lest I should give too much of my paper to the subject. My acknowledgements are likewise due to your fair sister, who has transcribed so many sheets in so neat a hand, and with so much accuracy.

At present I have no leisure for Homer, but shall certainly find leisure to examine him with a reference to your strictures, before I send him a second time to the printer. This I am at present unwilling to do, choosing rather to wait, if that may be, till I shall have undergone the discipline of all the reviewers; none of whom have yet taken me in hand, the Gentleman's Magazine excepted. By several of his remarks I

have benefited, and shall no doubt be benefited by the remarks of all.

Milton at present engrosses me altogether. His Latin pieces I have translated, and have begun with the Italian. These are few, and will not detain me long. I shall then proceed immediately to deliberate upon, and to settle the plan of my commentary, which I have hitherto had but little time to consider. I look forward to it, for this reason, with some anxiety. I trust at least that this anxiety will cease when I have once satisfied myself about the best manner of conducting it. But after all I seem to fear more the labour to which it calls me, than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended. To the labours of versifying I have no objection; but to the labours of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case, I shall be dull, and must be contented to share the censure of being so, with almost all the commentators that have ever existed.

I have expected, but not wondered that I have not received Sir Thomas More, and the other MSS. you promised me, because my silence has been such, considering how loudly I was called upon to write, that you must have concluded me either dead or dying, and did not choose perhaps to trust them to executors.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, March 2, 1792.

I HAVE this moment finished a comparison of your remarks with my text, and feel so sensibly my obligations to your great accuracy and kindness, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of expressing them

immediately. I only wish that instead of revising the two first books of the Iliad, you could have found leisure to revise the whole two poems, sensible how much my work would have benefited.

I have not always adopted your lines, though often perhaps at least as good as my own; because there will and must be dissimilarity of manner between two so accustomed to the pen as we are. But I have let few passages go unamended, which you seemed to think exceptionable; and this not at all from complaisance; for in such a cause I would not sacrifice an iota on that principle, but on clear conviction.

I have as yet heard nothing from Johnson about the two MSS. you announce, but feel ashamed that I should want your letter to remind me of your obliging offer to inscribe Sir Thomas More to me, should you resolve to publish him. Of my consent to such a measure you need not doubt. I am covetous of respect and honour from all such as you.

Tame hare, at present I have none. But to make amends, I have a beautiful little spaniel, called Beau, to whom I will give the kiss your sister Sally intended for the former, unless she should command me to bestow it elsewhere; it shall attend on her directions.

I am going to take a last dinner with a most agreeable family, who have been my only neighbours ever since I have lived at Weston. On Monday they go to London, and in the summer to an estate in Oxfordshire, which is to be their home in future. The occasion is not at all a pleasant one to me, nor does it leave me spirits to add more than that I am, dear sir,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, March 4, 1792.

My patience must indeed have been made of flimsy stuff, had it given way to your reasonable objection. Yours is likely to undergo a severer trial while I pester you again on this trivial subject.

You and I were well content with the new edition of my four lines as corrected and amended by my cousin. You even thought that they could not be mended: but she was of a different opinion, and has given a copy of them I think still better. Unless, therefore, you have already sent them, I shall be obliged to you if you will not, till I can remit to you this best edition, which I shall soon be able to do by the aid of my cousin, who goes to town on Wednesday. They are at present thus altered:—

In vain to live from age to age,
While modern bards endeavour,
I write my name in Patty's page,
And gain my point for ever.

The greater propriety of this way of expressing it will present itself to you, and therefore need not be mentioned.

You may dismiss all fears lest I should bestow praise on so unworthy a subject of it as his R. H. Whatever I may write on that occasion, shall, you may depend on it, do him as little honour and as much justice as the lines you sent me. I have paid here and there a compliment to persons who I knew deserved one, and I would not invalidate them all by proving that my Muse is an indiscriminating harlot, and her good word nothing worth.

All our little world is going to London, the gulf that swallows most of our good things, and, like a bad stomach, too often assimilates them to itself. Our neighbours at the Hall go thither to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, as we lately called them, but now Sir John and my Lady, are no longer inhabitants here, but henceforth of Bucklands, in Berkshire. I feel the loss of them, and shall feel it, since kinder or more friendly treatment I never can receive at any hands, than I have always found at theirs. But it has long been a foreseen change, and was indeed almost daily expected long before it happened. The desertion of the Hall, however, will not be total. The second brother, George, now Mr. Courtenay, intends to reside there; and with him, as with his elder brother, I have always been on terms the most agreeable.

Such is this variable scene; so variable, that had the reflections I sometimes make upon it a permanent influence, I should tremble at the thought of a new connexion; and to be out of the reach of its mutability, lead almost the life of a hermit. It is well with those who, like you, have God for their companion. Death cannot deprive them of Him, and he changes not the place of his abode. Other changes, therefore, to them are all supportable; and what you say of your own experience is the strongest possible proof of it. Had you lived without God, you could not have endured the loss you mention. May He preserve me from a similar one; at least, till he shall be pleased to draw me to himself again! Then, if ever that day come, it will make me equal to any burthen; but at present I can bear nothing well. Adieu. Mrs. Unwin is, I

hope, daily regaining strength, and joins me in love to yourself and Betsy. Lady Hesketh sends compliments. I am sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston, March 8, 1792.

HAVING just finished all my Miltonic translations, and not yet begun my comments, I find an interval that cannot be better employed than in discharging arrears due to my correspondents, of whom I begin first a letter to you, though your claim be of less ancient standing than those of all the rest.

I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and especially that your indisposition has been attended with excessive pain. But may I be permitted to observe, that your going to church on Christmas Day, immediately after such a sharp fit of rheumatism, was not according to the wisdom with which I believe you to be endued, nor was it acting so charitably toward yourself as I am persuaded you would have acted toward another. To another you would, I doubt not have suggested that text—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice,"—as implying a gracious dispensation, in circumstances like yours, from the practice of so severe and dangerous a service.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, is better; but still wants much of complete restoration. We have reached a time of life when heavy blows, if not fatal, are at least long felt.

I have received many testimonies concerning my

Homer, which do me much honour, and afford me great satisfaction; but none from which I derive, or have reason to derive, more than that of Mr. Martyn. It is of great use to me, when I write, to suppose some such person at my elbow, witnessing what I do; and I ask myself frequently,—Would this please him? If I think it would, it stands; if otherwise, I alter it. My work is thus finished, as it were, under the eye of some of the best judges, and has the better chance to win their approbation when they actually see it.

Almost immediately after the receipt of your last favour, I addressed myself to the subject you did me the honour to recommend to me, and produced the following stanzas. This will show at least the readiness with which my Muse undertakes to fulfil all commands from Pertenhall, which is the reason why I mention it.

ON A LATE THEFT.

Sweet nymph, who art, it seems, accused
Of stealing George's pen,
Use it thyself, and having used,
E'en give it him again:

The plume of his, that has one scrap
Of thy good sense express'd,
Will be a feather in his cap
Worth more than all his *crest*.

Your approbation is all the fame I propose to myself on this occasion; for I wish to be known only to yourself and Mr. King as the author. Our united best compliments attend you both; and

I am, my dear madam,
Affectionately yours,
W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, March 11, 1792.

You talk of primroses that you pulled on Candlemas Day; but what think you of me who heard a nightingale on New-year's Day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune; good indeed, for if it was at all an omen it could not be an unfavourable one. The winter, however, is now making himself amends, and seems the more peevish for having been encroached on at so undue a season. Nothing less than a large slice out of the spring will satisfy him.

Lady Hesketh left us yesterday. She intended, indeed, to have left us four days sooner: but in the evening before the day fixed for her departure, snow enough fell to occasion just so much delay of it.

We have faint hopes that in the month of May we shall see her again. I know that you have had a letter from her, and you will no doubt have the grace not to make her wait long for an answer.

We expect Mr. Rose on Tuesday; but he stays with us only till the Saturday following. With him I shall have some conferences on the subject of Homer, respecting a new edition I mean, and some perhaps on the subject of Milton; on him I have not yet begun to comment, or even fix the time when I shall.

Forget not your promised visit!

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 18, 1792.

We are now once more reduced to our dual state, having lost our neighbours at the Hall, and our inmate Lady Hesketh. Mr. Rose, indeed, has spent two or three days here, and is still with us: but he leaves us in the afternoon. There are those in the world whom we love, and whom we are happy to see; but we are happy likewise in each other, and so far independent of our fellow mortals, as to be able to pass our time comfortably without them,—as comfortably, at least, as Mrs. Unwin's frequent indispositions, and my no less frequent troubles of mind, will permit. When I am much distressed, any company but hers distresses me more, and makes me doubly sensible of my sufferings; though sometimes, I confess, it falls out otherwise; and by the help of more general conversation, I recover that elasticity of mind which is able to resist the pressure. On the whole, I believe, I am situated exactly as I should wish to be, were my situation to be determined on by my own election; and am denied no comfort that is compatible with the total absence of the chief of all.

William Peace called on me, I forget when,—but about a year ago. His errand was to obtain from me a certificate of his good behaviour during the time he had lived with us. His conduct in our service had been such, for sobriety and integrity, as entitled him to it; and I readily gave him one. At the same time, I confess myself not at all surprised that the family to which you recommended him soon grew weary of him. He

had a bad temper that always sat astride on a runaway tongue, and ceased not to spur and to kick it into all the sin and mischief that such an ungovernable member, so ridden, was sure to fall into. He had no sooner quitted us, which he did when he married, than he made even us, who had always treated him with kindness, a mark for his slanderous humour. What he said we know not, because we chose not to know; but such things we were assured, and credibly too, as had we known them, would have been extremely offensive to us. Whether he be a Christian or not, is no business of mine to determine. There was a time when he seemed to have Christian experience, and there has been a much longer time in which, his attendance on ordinances excepted, he has manifested, I doubt, no one symptom of the Christian character. Prosperity did him harm: adversity, perhaps, may do him good. I wish it may; and if he be indeed a pupil of divine grace, it certainly will, when he has been sufficiently exercised with it; of which he seems, at present, to have a very promising prospect.

You judge well concerning the Prince, and better than I did. His seducers are certainly most to be blamed, and so I have been used both to say and to think; but when I wrote my last, they happened not to occur to me. That he and all dissolute princes are entitled to compassion on account of the snares to which their situation exposes them, is likewise a remark which I have frequently made myself, but did not on that occasion advert to it. But the day is come when it behoves princes to be a little more cautious. These allowances will not be made by the many, espe-

cially they will be apt to censure their excesses with a good deal of severity, if themselves should be called upon to pay the piper. That our royal hopes are not a little more discreet in their management at such a time as this seems utterly unaccountable, unless on a supposition that their practices have brought them to a state of blind and frantic desperation that will not suffer them to regard the consequences. The ministers of sedition are busy,—indefatigable indeed, and the expense that attends a kingly government is an argument which millions begin to feel the force of. But I shall tire you with my politics, and the more perhaps because they are so gloomy. The sable cloud, however, has a luminous edge. The unmanageable prince and the no less unmanageable multitude, have each a mouth into which God can thrust a curb when he pleases, and kings shall reign and the people obey to the last moment of his appointment.

Adieu, my dear friend; with our united love to yourself and Miss Catlett,

I remain affectionately yours,

WM. COWPER.

Mr. Rose desires his respectful compliments.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, March 23, 1792.

I HAVE read your play carefully, and with great pleasure; it seems now to be a performance that cannot fail to do you much credit. Yet, unless my memory deceives me, the scene between Cecilia and Heron in

the garden has lost something that pleased me much when I saw it first; and I am not sure that you have not likewise obliterated an account of Sir Thomas's execution, that I found very pathetic. It would be strange if in these two particulars I should seem to miss what never existed; you will presently know whether I am as good at remembering what I never saw, as I am at forgetting what I have seen. But if I am right, I cannot help recommending the omitted passages to your reconsideration. If the play were designed for representation, I should be apt to think Cecilia's first speech rather too long, and should prefer to have it broken into dialogue, by an interposition now and then from one of her sisters. But since it is designed, as I understand, for the closet only, that objection seems of no importance; at no rate, however, would I expunge it; because it is both prettily imagined, and elegantly written.

I have read your *cursory remarks*, and am much pleased both with the style and the argument. Whether the latter be new or not, I am not competent to judge; if it be, you are entitled to much praise for the invention of it. Where other data are wanting to ascertain the time when an author of many pieces wrote each in particular, there can be no better criterion by which to determine the point, than the more or less proficiency manifested in the composition. Of this proficiency, where it appears, and of those plays in which it appears not, you seem to me to have judged well and truly; and consequently I approve of your arrangement.

I attended, as you desired me, in reading the cha-

racter of Cecilia, to the hint you gave me concerning your sister Sally, and give you joy of such a sister. This however not exclusively of the rest, for though they may not be all Cecilias, I have a strong persuasion that they are all very amiable.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, March 25, 1792.

MR. Rose's longer stay than he at first intended was the occasion of the longer delay of my answer to your note, as you may both have perceived by the date thereof, and learned from his information. It was a daily trouble to me to see it lying in the window-seat, while I knew you were in expectation of its arrival. By this time I presume you have seen him, and have seen likewise Mr. Hayley's friendly letter and complimentary sonnet, as well as the letter of the honest Quaker; all of which, at least the two former, I shall be glad to receive again at a fair opportunity. Mr. Hayley's letter slept six weeks in Johnson's custody. It was necessary I should answer it without delay, and accordingly I answered it the very evening on which I received it, giving him to understand, among other things how much vexation the bookseller's folly had cost me, who had detained it so long; especially on account of the distress that I knew it must have occasioned to him also. From his reply, which the return of the post brought me, I learn that in the long interval of my noncorrespondence he had suffered anxiety and mortification enough; so much that I dare

say he made twenty vows never to hazard again either letter or compliment to an unknown author. What indeed could he imagine less, than that I meant by such an obstinate silence to tell him that I valued neither him nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship; in short that I considered him as a rival, and therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him? He is now, however, convinced that I love him, as indeed I do, and I account him the chief acquisition that my own verse has ever procured me. Brute should I be if I did not, for he promises me every assistance in his power.

I have likewise a very pleasing letter from Mr. Park, which I wish you were here to read; and a very pleasing poem that came enclosed in it for my revisal, written when he was only twenty years of age, yet wonderfully well written, though wanting some correction.

To Mr. Hurdis I return Sir Thomas More to-morrow; having revised it a second time. He is now a very respectable figure, and will do my friend, who gives him to the public this spring, considerable credit.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 30, 1792.

My mornings, ever since you went, have been given to my correspondents: this morning I have already written a long letter to Mr. Park, giving my opinion of his poem, which is a favourable one. I forget whether I showed it to you when you were here, and even

whether I had then received it. He has genius and delicate taste; and if he were not an engraver, might be one of our first hands in poetry.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, April 5, 1792.

You talk, my dear friend, as John Bunyan says, like one that has the egg-shell still upon his head. You talk of the mighty favours that you have received from me, and forget entirely those for which I am indebted to you; but though you forget them, I shall not, nor ever think that I have requited you, so long as any opportunity presents itself of rendering you the smallest service; small indeed is all that I can ever hope to render.

You now perceive, and sensibly, that not without reason I complained as I used to do of those tiresome rogues the printers. Bless yourself that you have not two thick quartos to bring forth as I had. My vexation was always much increased by this reflection; they are every day, and all day long, employed in printing for somebody, and why not for me? This was adding mortification to disappointment, so that I often lost all patience.

The suffrage of Dr. Robertson makes more than amends for the scurvy jest passed upon me by the wag unknown. I regard him not; nor, except for about two moments after I first heard of his doings, have I ever regarded him. I have somewhere a secret enemy; I know not for what cause he should be so,

but he I imagine supposes that he has a cause; it is well, however, to have but one; and I will take all the care I can not to increase the number.

I have begun my notes, and am playing the commentator manfully. The worst of it is, that I am anticipated in almost all my opportunities to shine by those who have gone before me.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, April 6, 1792.

GOD grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where suddenly formed they are apt soon to terminate! But, as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart toward you that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself, I trust, in the event a propitious omen.

* * * * * *

Horace says somewhere, though I may quote it amiss perhaps, for I have a terrible memory,—

Utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
Consentit astrum.———

* * * * Our *stars consent*, at least have had an influence somewhat similar in another and more important article.——* * *

It gives me the sincerest pleasure that I may hope to see you at Weston; for as to any migrations of mine, they must, I fear, notwithstanding the joy I should feel in being a guest of yours, be still considered

in the light of impossibilities. Come then, my friend, and be as welcome, as the country people say here, as the flowers in May! I am happy, as I say, in the expectation; but the fear, or rather the consciousness that I shall not answer on a nearer view, makes it a trembling kind of happiness, and a doubtful.

After the privacy which I have mentioned above, I went to Huntingdon; soon after my arrival there, I took up my quarters at the house of the Rev. Mr. Unwin; I lived with him while he lived, and ever since his death have lived with his widow. Her, therefore, you will find mistress of the house; and I judge of you amiss, or you will find her just such as you would wish. To me she has been often a nurse, and invariably the kindest friend through a thousand adversities that I have had to grapple with in the course of almost thirty years. I thought it better to introduce her to you thus, than to present her to you at your coming, quite a stranger.

Bring with you any books that you think may be useful to my commentatorship, for with you for an interpreter I shall be afraid of none of them. And in truth, if you think that you shall want them, you must bring books for your own use also, for they are an article with which I am *heinously unprovided*; being much in the condition of the man whose library Pope describes as

> No mighty store,
> His own works neatly bound, and little more!

You shall know how this has come to pass hereafter.

Tell me, my friend, are your letters in your own

handwriting? If so, I am in pain for your eyes, lest by such frequent demands upon them I should hurt them. I had rather write you three letters for one, much as I prize your letters, than *that* should happen. And now for the present, adieu;—I am going to accompany Milton into the lake of fire and brimstone, having just begun my annotations.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, April 8, 1792.

YOUR entertaining and pleasant letter, resembling in that respect all that I receive from you, deserved a more expeditious answer; and should have had what it so well deserved, had it not reached me at a time when, deeply in debt to all my correspondents, I had letters to write without number. Like autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in *Vallombrosa*, the unanswered farrago lay before me. If I quote at all, you must expect me henceforth to quote none but Milton, since for a long time to come I shall be occupied with him only.

I was much pleased with the extract you gave me from your sister Eliza's letter; she writes very elegantly, and (if I might say it without seeming to flatter you) I should say much in the manner of her brother. It is well for your sister Sally that gloomy Dis is already a married man; else perhaps finding her, as he found Proserpine, studying botany in the fields, he might transport her to his own flowerless abode, where all her hopes of improvement in that science would be at an end for ever.

What letter of the 10th of December is that which you say you have not yet answered? Consider it is April now, and I never remember any thing that I write half so long. But perhaps it relates to Calchas, for I do remember that you have not yet furnished me with the secret history of him and his family, which I demanded from you.

Adieu. Yours, most sincerely,

W. C.

I rejoice that you are so well with the learned Bishop of Sarum, and well remember how he ferreted the vermin Lauder out of all his hidings, when I was a boy at Westminster.

I have not yet studied with your last remarks before me, but hope soon to find an opportunity.

TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

MY DEAR LADY FROG, Weston, April 16, 1792.

I THANK you for your letter, as sweet as it was short, and as sweet as good news could make it. You encourage a hope that has made me happy ever since I have entertained it. And if my wishes can hasten the event, it will not be long suspended. As to your jealousy, I mind it not, or only to be pleased with it. I shall say no more on the subject at present than this, that of all ladies living, a certain lady, whom I need not name, would be the lady of my choice for a certain gentleman, were the whole sex submitted to my election.

What a delightful anecdote is that which you tell

me of a young lady detected in the very act of stealing our Catharina's praises; is it possible that she can survive the shame, the mortification of such a discovery? Can she ever see the same company again, or any company that she can suppose by the remotest possibility may have heard the tidings? If she can, she must have an assurance equal to her vanity. A lady in London stole my song on the broken Rose, or rather would have stolen, and have passed it for her own. But she too was unfortunate in her attempt; for there happened to be a female cousin of mine in company, who knew that I had written it. It is very flattering to a poet's pride, that the ladies should thus hazard every thing for the sake of appropriating his verses. I may say with Milton, that I am fallen *on evil tongues and evil days*, being not only plundered of that which belongs to me, but being charged with that which does not. Thus it seems, (and I have learned it from more quarters than one,) that a report is, and has been some time current in this and the neighbouring counties, that though I have given myself the air of declaiming against the Slave Trade in the Task, I am in reality a friend to it; and last night I received a letter from Joe Rye, to inform me that I have been much traduced and calumniated on this account. Not knowing how I could better or more effectually refute the scandal, I have this morning sent a copy [of verses] to the Northampton paper, prefaced by a short letter to the printer, specifying the occasion. The verses are in honour of Mr. Wilberforce, and sufficiently expressive of my present sentiments on the subject. You are a wicked fair one for disappointing us

of our expected visit, and therefore out of mere spite I will not insert them. I have been very ill these ten days, and for the same spite's sake will not tell you what has ailed me. But lest you should die of a fright, I will have the mercy to tell you that I am recovering.

Mrs. G——— and her little ones are gone, but your brother is still here. He told me that he had some expectations of Sir John at Weston; if he come, I shall most heartily rejoice once more to see him at a table so many years his own.

W. C.

TO THE REV. J. JEKYLL RYE.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, April 16, 1792.

I AM truly sorry that you should have suffered any apprehensions, such as your letter indicates, to molest you for a moment. I believe you to be as honest a man as lives, and consequently do not believe it possible that you could in your letter to Mr. Pitts, or any otherwise, wilfully misrepresent me. In fact you did not; my opinions on the subject in question were, when I had the pleasure of seeing you, such as in that letter you stated them to be, and such they still continue.

If any man concludes, because I allow myself the use of sugar and rum, that therefore I am a friend to the *Slave Trade*, he concludes rashly, and does me great wrong; for the man lives not who abhors it more than I do. My reasons for my own practice are satisfactory to myself, and they whose practice is contrary are, I suppose, satisfied with theirs. So far is good. Let every man act according to his own judgement

and conscience; but if we condemn another for not seeing with our eyes, we are unreasonable; and if we reproach him on that account, we are uncharitable, which is a still greater evil.

I had heard, before I received the favour of yours, that such a report of me, as you mention, had spread about the country. But my informant told me that it was founded thus: The people of Olney petitioned Parliament for the abolition; my name was sought among the subscribers, but was not found: a question was asked, how that happened? Answer was made, that I had once indeed been an enemy to the Slave Trade, but had changed my mind; for that having lately read a history or an account of Africa, I had seen it there asserted, that till the commencement of that traffic the negroes, multiplying at a prodigious rate, were necessitated to devour each other: for which reason I had judged it better, that the trade should continue, than that they should be again reduced to so horrid a custom.

Now all this is a fable. I have read no such history; I never in my life read any such assertion; nor had such an assertion presented itself to me, should I have drawn any such conclusion from it: on the contrary, bad as it were, I think it would be better the negroes should have eaten one another, than that we should carry them to market. The single reason why I did not sign the petition was, because I was never asked to do it; and the reason why I was never asked was, because I am not a parishioner of Olney.

Thus stands the matter. You will do me the justice, I dare say, to speak of me as of a man who abhors

the commerce, which is now I hope in a fair way to be abolished, as often as you shall find occasion. And I beg you henceforth to do yourself the justice to believe it impossible that I should for a moment suspect you of duplicity or misrepresentation. I have been grossly slandered, but neither by you, nor in consequence of any thing that you have either said or written. I remain therefore, still as heretofore, with great respect,

Much and truly yours,

W. C.

Mrs. Unwin's compliments attend you.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, April 26, 1792.

I HAVE been very ill, but nobody must ask what I have ailed; yet if any should be rash enough after this prohibition to insist upon knowing what, you may tell them that I have suffered by that excruciating disorder with which God visited the Philistines while the ark was captive among them. I am now, however, after more than a fortnight's confinement, pretty well restored again, and walked yesterday for the first time.

I will endeavour when Hayley comes to greet him with a countenance that shall not stiffen him into free-stone, but cannot be answerable for my success. It will depend in some measure on the countenance that he presents himself; for whether I will or not, I am always a physiognomist, and if I dislike a man's looks, am sure to assume such as he will find equally disagreeable. But I hope better things from my friend

Hayley. It seldom happens that a person so amiable in his disposition is very Gorgonian in his aspect.

I have a great respect for Mr. Frogatt. His behaviour to young Hesketh, as well as his constancy to Mr. Rose, both entitle him to it. It gives me pleasure, for your sake especially, that Sir Robert is so affectionately disposed toward his grandson. I know that you interest yourself much in the young man's welfare, and therefore, both on that account and on that which so much influences yourself (respect for the memory of Sir Thomas) shall always be glad to hear of his prosperity.

I am glad that you found Mr. Mackenzie so agreeable; should his new office occasion him to settle in town, you will have him, I suppose, for a visitor. Thanks for Hannah More's verses, which, like all that she writes, are neatly executed, and handsomely turned. I shall this instant transcribe for you some of mine, which I found it necessary to publish in the last Northampton Mercury, attested with my name at length, in order to clear my character from a calumny that had spread all over the country concerning my real opinion of the slave trade. This I learned not from the Quaker's letter only, but from Joe Rye also, who kindly wrote on purpose to apprize me of it.

The Hills I know dislike sonnets, therefore send not this to them,—else do what you please with it. For my own part I like them much, when they are on subjects proper to them; such, I mean, as are best expressed in a close sententious manner, for they are too short to admit of a loose one.

I love and honour any lady who means me a pre-

sent; but if, as I suspect, Mrs. D——— C—— be the lady in question, I must beg leave to waive it. I have rendered her no service worthy of a requital, and should be ashamed to receive any. A portfolio with a lock to it would be very convenient to me, and therefore very acceptable from any other fair hand than that of the lady abovesaid. Thanks for an incomparable cheese.

With Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances, I am most truly thine,

WM. COWPER.

P. S. I was shocked, very much shocked, at Dr. Madan's rencontre; the human head, at the age of his, is very little fitted to sustain a blow from a London ruffian.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, Weston, May 5, 1792.

I REJOICE, as thou reasonably supposest me to do, in the matrimonial news communication in your last. Not that it was altogether news to me, for twice I had received broad hints of it from Lady Frog by letter, and several times *vivâ voce* while she was here. But she enjoined *me* secrecy as well as *you*, and you know that all secrets are safe with me; safer far than the winds in the bags of Æolus. I know not in fact the lady whom it would give me more pleasure to call Mrs. Courtenay, than the lady in question; partly because I know her, but especially because I know her to be all that I can wish in a neighbour.

I have often observed that there is a regular alternation of good and evil in the lot of men, so that a favourable incident may be considered as the harbinger of an unfavourable one, and *vice versâ*. Dr. Madan's experience witnesses to the truth of this observation. One day he gets a broken head, and the next a mitre to heal it. I rejoice that he has met with so effectual a cure, though my joy is not unmingled with concern; for till now I had some hope of seeing him, but since I live in the North, and his episcopal call is in the West, that is a gratification I suppose which I must no longer look for.

My sonnet, which I sent you, was printed in the Northampton paper last week, and this week it produced me a complimentary one in the same paper, which served to convince me at least by the matter of it, that my own was not published without occasion, and that it had answered its purpose.

My correspondence with Hayley proceeds briskly, and is very affectionate on both sides. I expect him here in about a fortnight, and wish heartily, with Mrs. Unwin, that you would give him a meeting. I have promised him indeed that he shall find us alone, but you are one of the family.

I wish much to print the following lines in one of the daily papers. Lord S.'s vindication of the poor culprit in the affair of Cheit-Sing has confirmed me in the belief that he has been injuriously treated, and I think it an act merely of justice to take a little notice of him.

TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
While young, humane, conversable, and kind;
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle THEN,
Now grown a villain, and the WORST of men;
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the BEST.

If thou wilt take the pains to send them to thy newsmonger, I hope thou wilt do well. Adieu!

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST OF ALL JOHNNIES, Weston, May 20, 1792.

I AM not sorry that your ordination is postponed. A year's learning and wisdom, added to your present stock, will not be more than enough to satisfy the demands of your function. Neither am I sorry that you find it difficult to fix your thoughts to the serious point at all times. It proves at least that you attempt and wish to do it, and these are good symptoms. Woe to those who enter on the ministry of the Gospel without having previously asked at least from God a mind and spirit suited to their occupation, and whose experience never differs from itself, because they are always alike vain, light, and inconsiderate. It is therefore matter of great joy to me to hear you complain of levity, and such it is to Mrs. Unwin. She is, I thank God, tolerably well, and loves you. As to the time of your journey hither, the sooner after June the better; till then we shall have company.

I forget not my debts to your dear sister, and your aunt Balls. Greet them both with a brother's kiss, and place it to my account. I will write to them when Milton and a thousand other engagements will give me leave. Mr. Hayley is here on a visit. We have formed a friendship that I trust will last for life, and render us an edifying example to all future poets.

Adieu! Lose no time in coming after the time mentioned.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, May 24, 1792.

I WISH with all my heart, my dearest coz, that I had not ill news for the subject of the present letter. My friend, my Mary, has again been attacked by the same disorder that threatened me last year with the loss of her, and of which you were yourself a witness. Gregson would not allow that first stroke to be paralytic, but this he acknowledges to be so; and with respect to the former, I never had myself any doubt that it was; but this has been much the severest. Her speech has been almost unintelligible from the moment that she was struck; it is with difficulty that she opens her eyes, and she cannot keep them open, the muscles necessary to the purpose being contracted; and as to self-moving powers, from place to place, and the use of her right hand and arm, she has entirely lost them.

It has happened well, that of all men living the man most qualified to assist and comfort me is here, though

till within these few days I never saw him, and a few weeks since had no expectation that I ever should. You have already guessed that I mean Hayley. Hayley who loves me as if he had known me from my cradle. When he returns to town, as he must, alas! too soon, he will pay his respects to you.

I will not conclude without adding that our poor patient is beginning, I hope, to recover from this stroke also; but her amendment is slow, as must be expected at her time of life and in such a disorder. I am as well myself as you have ever known me in a time of much trouble, and even better.

It was not possible to prevail on Mrs. Unwin to let me send for Dr. Kerr, but Hayley has written to his friend Dr. Austin a representation of her case, and we expect his opinion and advice to-morrow. In the mean time, we have borrowed an electrical machine from our neighbour Socket, the effect of which she tried yesterday, and the day before, and we think it has been of material service.

She was seized while Hayley and I were walking, and Mr. Greatheed, who called while we were absent, was with her.

I forgot in my last to thank thee for the proposed amendments of thy friend. Whoever he is, make my compliments to him, and thank him. The passages to which he objects have been all altered; and when he shall see them new dressed, I hope he will like them better.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, The Lodge, May 26, 1792.

KNOWING that you will be anxious to learn how we go on, I write a few lines to inform you that Mrs. Unwin daily recovers a little strength, and a little power of utterance; but she seems strongest, and her speech is most distinct, in a morning. Hayley has been all in all to us on this very afflictive occasion. Love him, I charge you, dearly for my sake. Where could I have found a man, except himself, who could have made himself so necessary to me in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him?

Adieu, my dear sweet coz. Mrs. Unwin, as plainly as her poor lips can speak, sends her best love, and Hayley threatens in a few days to lay close siege to your affections in person.

W. C.

There is some hope, I find, that the Chancellor may continue in office, and I shall be glad if he does; because we have no single man worthy to succeed him.

I open my letter again to thank you, my dearest, coz, for yours just received. Though happy, as you well know, to see *you* at all times, we have no need, and I trust shall have none, to trouble you with a journey made on purpose; yet once again, I am willing and desirous to believe, we shall be a happy trio at Weston; but unless necessity dictates a journey of charity, I wish all yours hither to be made for pleasure. Farewell.—Thou shalt know how we go on.

TO THE REV. MR. CARWARDINE, AT MRS. BUTLER'S, JAMES STREET, BUCKINGHAM GATE, LONDON.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, May 28, 1792.

CEREMONY perhaps might teach me to address a stranger with an air more distant and reserved, but I gratify my feelings toward *you* by addressing you as one with whom I am well acquainted. In fact, I am and must be dull indeed, if I did not learn from the delicacy of the compliment you have just paid me, by presenting my books to the Chancellor's daughter, that you are one of the few whom I hold as the men of my heart, and whom, had I an opportunity to cultivate an intimacy with you, I should love most dearly. I tell Hayley he is one of the happiest men in the world to have had the fortune to form friendships with some of the best and kindest spirits that it has to boast of.

I take encouragement from your kindness to give you a little trouble, which however I have reason to be satisfied will be none to you, and will beg you to transcribe into one of the blank leaves of my first volume, or wheresoever you can find room for them, the two beautiful sonnets, in which our dear common friend has celebrated both me and Mrs. Unwin; me, indeed, far above my deserts, but not her. To yourself and to Hayley I shall owe it, if the Chancellor's friendship for me, which I know was once sincere and fervent, should now at last, in the latter end of our days, recover itself and glow again. But whether so or not, I shall always have reason to account myself equally indebted to you both. May God bless you. Believe

me, with true esteem and a quick sense of your kindness,

Your affectionate, humble servant,

WM. COWPER.

Of one Sonnet you have a copy, and I transcribe the other on the opposite side.

I know not what you will think of *my* delicacy, who have here transcribed my own eulogy, and such an eulogy too! not without blushes, I can assure you, but Hayley desired me to do it, and to him I am bound to refuse nothing.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

MY DEAREST ROSE, Weston, June 4, 1792.

I AM not such an ungrateful and insensible animal as to have neglected you thus long without a reason.

* * * * * * *

I cannot say that I am sorry that our dear Johnny finds the pulpit door shut against him at present. He is young, and can afford to wait another year; neither is it to be regretted, that his time of preparation for an office of so much importance as that of a minister of God's word should have been a little protracted. It is easier to direct the movements of a great army, than to guide a few souls to heaven; the way is narrow, and full of snares, and the guide himself has the most difficulties to encounter. But I trust he will do well. He is single in his views, honest-hearted, and desirous,

by prayer and study of the Scripture, to qualify himself for the service of his great Master, who will suffer no such man to fail for want of his aid and protection.

Adieu.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

ALL'S WELL; Weston, June 4, 1792.

WHICH words I place as conspicuously as possible, and prefix them to my letter, to save you the pain, my friend and brother, of a moment's anxious speculation. Poor Mary proceeds in her amendment still, and improves, I think, even at a swifter rate than when you left her. The stronger she grows, the faster she gathers strength, which is perhaps the natural course of recovery. She walked so well this morning, that she told me at my first visit she had entirely forgot her illness; and she spoke so distinctly, and had so much of her usual countenance, that, had it been possible, she would have made me forget it too.

Returned from my walk, blown to tatters—found two dear things in the study, your letter, and my Mary! She is bravely well, and your beloved epistle does us both good. I found your kind pencil note in my song-book, as soon as I came down on the morning of your departure; and Mary was vexed to the heart, that the simpletons who watched her supposed her asleep, when she was not; for she learned soon after you were gone, that you would have peeped at her, had you known her to have been awake. I perhaps might have had a peep too, and therefore was

as vexed as she; but if it please God, we shall make ourselves large amends for all lost peeps by and by at Eartham.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 5, 1792.

YESTERDAY was a noble day with us—speech almost perfect—eyes open almost the whole day, without any effort to keep them so; and the step wonderfully improved. But the night has been almost a sleepless one, owing partly I believe to her having had as much sleep again as usual the night before; for even when she is in tolerable health she hardly ever sleeps well two nights together. I found her accordingly a little out of spirits this morning, but still insisting on it that she is better. Indeed she always tells me so, and will probably die with those very words upon her lips. They will be true then at least, for then she will be best of all. She is now (the clock has just struck eleven) endeavouring, I believe, to get a little sleep, for which reason I do not yet let her know that I have received your letter.

Can I ever honour you enough for your zeal to serve me? Truly I think not: I am however so sensible of the love I owe you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have in short a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here; and though I believe that if any man living can

do me good, you will, I cannot yet persuade myself that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter, you are yourself a good which I can never value enough, and whether rich or poor in other respects, I shall always account myself better provided for than I deserve, with such a friend at my back as you. Let it please God to continue to me my William and Mary, and I will be more reasonable than to grumble.

I rose this morning wrapped round with a cloud of melancholy, and with a heart full of fears; but if I see Mary's amendment a little advanced, when she rises, I shall be better.

I have just been with her again. Except that she is fatigued for want of sleep, she seems as well as yesterday. The post brings me a letter from Hurdis, who is broken-hearted for a dying sister. Had we eyes sharp enough, we should see the arrows of Death flying in all directions, and account it a wonder that we and our friends escape them a single day.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, June 6, 1792.

If Hayley be with you when this arrives, or if he has breakfasted with you and is gone, he will have related to you what I told him in my last concerning Mrs. Unwin,—that she had passed but an indifferent night, and was rather languid for want of sleep. I was obliged to seal that letter and send it, before she was brought down stairs, but on my return from walking

I found her in the study. Notwithstanding her almost sleepless night, she was evidently a little better, could walk with less support, and could articulate rather more distinctly. At night she walked from the stair-head through my chamber to her own, leaning only on one arm, and stepping rather less like an infant.

Her last night has not been much better than the former, for she has had no sleep since three this morning, which debilitates her sadly, and at her first rising occasions such contractions of the muscles on the right side as would tempt one to think her worse. But these appearances in a measure vanish as the day goes on. She is now just arrived in the study, and has alarmed me a little, by neither looking nor speaking so well as she did in the evening. Yet she walked from the door to her chair better than ever. For the future, I shall make my reports less frequent, for the difference between day and day is so slight, that I shall otherwise seem always to give the same account of her.

Should Hayley be with you, tell him that I have given my friend Mr. Rose an introductory letter to him. He wished much for the happiness of knowing him, and though he will hardly be able to catch him if he leaves town on Friday, as I know he intends, I was desirous that the disappointment should not be owing to me.

I knew that you would fall in love with Hayley. Every body here has done so, and wherever he goes, every body must. The Chancellor, I am willing to hope, will not be the only insensible;—but I am less sanguine in my expectations of his success in that, and

indeed in every other quarter where my interest is concerned, than either he or you. Depend on it, my dear, I was born to be poor, and although Hayley would enrich me if any mortal could, having such zeal and such talents as usually carry all before them, my destiny, I fear, will prove too hard for him. Adieu, my dear, with our poor patient's best love, I remain ever yours,

WM. COWPER.

The jaunt to Stow was made by Sam and his wife for the sake of a visit to an uncle from whom they have expectations. Hannah went with them, and the uncle accompanied them through the gardens. But all this came to pass many days before Mrs. Unwin was taken ill.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 7, 1792.

Of what materials can you suppose me made, if after all the rapid proofs that you have given me of your friendship, I do not love you with all my heart, and regret your absence continually? But you must permit me nevertheless to be melancholy now and then; or if you will not, I must be so without your permission; for that sable thread is so intermixed with the very thread of my existence, as to be inseparable from it, at least while I exist in the body. Be content therefore; let me sigh and groan, but always be sure that I love you! You will be well assured that I should not have indulged myself in this rhapsody about my-

self and my melancholy, had my present mood been of that complexion, or had not our poor Mary seemed still to advance in her recovery. So in fact she does, and has performed several little feats to day; such as either she could not perform at all, or very feebly, while you were with us.

I shall be glad if you have seen Johnny as I call him, my Norfolk cousin; he is a sweet lad, but as shy as a bird. It costs him always two or three days to open his mouth before a stranger; but when he does, he is sure to please by the innocent cheerfulness of his conversation. His sister too is one of my idols, for the resemblance she bears to my mother.

Mary and you have all my thoughts; and how should it be otherwise? She looks well, is better, and loves you dearly.

Adieu! my brother,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 10, 1792.

I DO indeed anxiously wish that every thing you do may prosper; and should I at last prosper by your means, shall taste double sweetness in prosperity for that reason.

I rose this morning, as I usually do, with a mind all in sables. In this mood I presented myself to Mary's bedside, whom I found, though after many hours lying awake, yet cheerful, and not to be affected with my desponding humour. It is a great blessing to us both that, poor feeble thing as she is, she has a most

invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness that nothing shakes. She is now in the study, and is certainly in some degree better than she was yesterday, but how to measure that little I know not, except by saying that it is just perceptible.

I am glad that you have seen my Johnny of Norfolk, because I know it will be a comfort to you to have seen your successor. He arrived, to my great joy, yesterday; and not having bound himself to any particular time of going, will, I hope, stay long with us. You are now once more snug in your retreat, and I give you joy of your return to it, after the bustle in which you have lived since you left Weston. Weston mourns your absence, and will mourn it till she sees you again. What is to become of Milton I know not; I do nothing but scribble to you, and seem to have no relish for any other employment. I have however, in pursuit of your idea to compliment Darwin, put a few stanzas together, which I shall subjoin; you will easily give them all that you find they want, and match the song with another.

I am now going to walk with Johnny, much cheered since I began writing to you, and by Mary's looks and good spirits.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, Weston, June 11, 1792.

THOU art ever in my thoughts, whether I am writing to thee or not; and my correspondence seems to grow upon me at such a rate, that I am not able to address

thee so often as I would. In fact, I live only to write letters. Hayley is as you see added to the number, and to him I write almost as duly as I rise in the morning; nor is he only added, but his friend Carwardine also—Carwardine the generous, the disinterested, the friendly. I seem in short to have stumbled suddenly on a race of heroes, men who resolve to have no interests of their own, till mine are served.

But I will proceed to other matters, that concern me more intimately, and more immediately, than all that can be done for me either by the great, or the small, or by both united. Since I wrote last, Mrs. Unwin has been continually improving in strength, but at so gradual a rate that I can only mark it by saying that she moves about every day with less support than the former. Her recovery is most of all retarded by want of sleep. On the whole I believe she goes on as well as could be expected, though not quite well enough to satisfy me. And Dr. Austin, speaking from the reports I have made of her, says he has no doubt of her restoration.

During the last two months I seem to myself to have been in a dream. It has been a most eventful period, and fruitful to an uncommon degree, both in good and evil. I have been very ill, and suffered excruciating pain. I recovered, and became quite well again. I received within my doors a man, but lately an entire stranger, and who now loves me as his brother, and forgets himself to serve me. Mrs. Unwin has been seized with an illness that for many days threatened to deprive me of her, and to cast a gloom, an impenetrable one, on all my future prospects. She

is now granted to me again. A few days since, I should have thought the moon might have descended into my purse as likely as any emolument, and now it seems not impossible. All this has come to pass with such rapidity as events move with in romance indeed, but not often in real life. Events of all sorts creep or fly exactly as God pleases.

To the foregoing I have to add in conclusion the arrival of my Johnny, just when I wanted him most, and when only a few days before I had no expectation of him. He came to dinner on Saturday, and I hope I shall keep him long. What comes next I know not, but shall endeavour, as you exhort me, to look for good, and I know I shall have your prayers that I may not be disappointed.

Hayley tells me you begin to be jealous of him, lest I should love him more than I love you, and bids me say, "that should I do so, you in revenge must love him more than I do."—Him I know you will love, and me, because you have such a habit of doing it that you cannot help it.

Adieu! My knuckles ache with letter writing. With my poor patient's affectionate remembrances, and Johnny's,

I am ever thine,

W. C.

TO THE REV. THOMAS CARWARDINE, EARL'S COLN PRIORY, NEAR HALSTEAD, ESSEX.

Weston Underwood,
June 11, 1792.

MY DEAR CARWARDINE,

SOONER or later I must address you in that style, since it is impossible that I should love Hayley as I do and not be familiar with his dearest friend; for which reason I may as well begin now. I thank you for your most friendly letter, and for all your most friendly doings in favour of a poor solitary poet, who, till within these few days, had no hopes of service from any body, except of such services as he has received from his own kindred, to whom he has been a burthen many years. But I owe them the justice to add that their kindness has not suffered them to think so.

My affairs have been in the best train possible since my dear brother bard and you have taken them in hand. He left London on Saturday, on which day I received a short note from him, dated the day before, beginning thus,—"Huzza! I have passed an agreeable hour from eight to nine this morning with the Chancellor. Left both him and Lord Kenyon, who was with us, so impressed with warm wishes to serve you, that I am persuaded your old friend Thurlow will accomplish it if possible."

Thus stands the affair at present. My volumes, your noble gift to Miss Thurlow (noble I mean in respect of the intention of the giver) seem to have

procured him this interview; for his first note, requesting an appointment to breakfast, remained unanswered so long that it seemed to be forgotten; but your present, which he found at Romney's, furnished him with a fair occasion for writing a second, and that second burst the barricado. If I succeed therefore, I owe my fortunes to William of Eartham and his friend of Coln, and if I do not succeed, shall always account myself as much indebted to them both as if I had. What dæmon could whisper in the Chancellor's ear that I am rich, I neither can guess nor wish to do it, but he was doubtless some dæmon who wished to starve me. Perhaps he will be disappointed, as all such dæmons should be.

I know well the Chancellor's benevolence of heart, and how much he is misunderstood by the world. When he was young he would do the kindest things, and at an expense to himself which at that time he could ill afford, and he would do them too in the most secret manner. I know not what is become of her now, but in those days there was a certain Miss Christian, the daughter, if I mistake not, of a Norfolk clergyman, who had been a friend of Thurlow's father. The girl was left pennyless, and he established her in Tavistock Street as a milliner, disbursing three hundred pounds to furnish a shop for her. I went with him to the house, and having seen her, am ready to swear that his motives were not, nor could be, of the amorous kind, for she was ugly to a wonder. No creature I believe knew any thing of this *truly Christian* intrigue but myself only. When I think

on these things, and hear them spoken of as I sometimes do

. . . . . *væ meum*
Fervens difficile bile tumet jecur.

Many a time I have fought his battles, and some I have convinced of their error.

In answer to your benevolent enquiries concerning my poor Mary, I have to tell you that her recovery proceeds *pedetentim tamen*, slowly, but as fast I suppose as, all things considered, I have any reason to expect. She now walks with very little support from one room to another, and articulates pretty intelligibly. She is this moment brought down into the study, and understanding that I am writing to you, says, a thousand thanks for me to Mr. Carwardine. Should we be so happy as to be able to emigrate in the autumn, you may depend on knowing when and by what route. In the mean time tell us by which we can approach you nearest.

Adieu—may God bless you and yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston Underwood, June 12, 1792.

I SHOULD be ashamed to compare the date of your letter with the date of mine, had I not again too good an excuse for my long silence. I have been ill myself; and, for some weeks, on account of a most painful disorder, was incapable both of reading and holding a pen. But this is over, and I am well again.

An illness that has distressed me much more, and

hindered me equally, has been one of the same kind which seized Mrs. Unwin last winter, only more severe, and consequently more alarming, and which seized her again about three weeks since, depriving her both of speech and of the use of her right side entirely. I was taking a morning walk with my friend and brother poet Hayley, at that time here on a visit, and at our return we found Mrs. Unwin, whom we had left about an hour, seized and disabled as I have said. By the use of the electrical machine, and other aids, she is, I thank God, so far restored as to be able to speak articulately, especially in a morning, and to move from one room to another with very little support; but it will be long, I fear, before she will be restored to the little health and strength she had, for she never overcame, entirely, the effects of the first attack.

My situation would have been melancholy indeed, had not Mr. Hayley providentially arrived about a week before we were visited with this affliction. It is impossible to convey to you in words an adequate idea of the affectionate interest he took in my distress, and of the tenderness of his attentions to our poor patient. He has some skill in medicine too, which, at our great distance from a physician, made him particularly useful. Last Friday se'nnight he was obliged to leave me, and since his departure I have the comfort of a young relation's company from Norfolk, a cousin of mine named Johnson, whom I remember to have mentioned to you in a former letter. Here, therefore, I may set up one more Ebenezer, and say, Thus far the Lord hath helped me. I have not been left alone under my burden, but have had a little friendly society for my

support, and feel my spirits now considerably relieved by symptoms of Mrs. Unwin's daily amendment.

It will give us great pleasure to hear that, since the summer has once more peeped at us, your painful complaint the rheumatism is abated. Mrs. Unwin bids me present to you her best compliments, and to Mr. King, to which I add my own, and remain,

Dear Madam,
Your affectionate friend
and most humble servant,
WM. COWPER,

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 4, 1792.

I KNOW not how you proceed in your life of Milton, but I suppose not very rapidly, for while you were here, and since you left us, you have had no other theme but me. As for myself, except my letters to you, and the nuptial song I inserted in my last, I have literally done nothing since I saw you. Nothing I mean in the writing way, though a great deal in another; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavouring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well, and had rather carry this point completely, than be the most famous editor of Milton that the world has ever seen, or shall see.

Your humorous descant upon my art of wishing made us merry, and consequently did good to us both. I sent my wish to the Hall yesterday. They are excellent neighbours, and so friendly to me, that I

wished to gratify them. When I went to pay my first visit, George flew into the court to meet me, and when I entered the parlour, Catharina sprang into my arms.

W. C.

TO MR. JOSEPH JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, July 8, 1792.

Truditur dies die,
Novæque pergunt interire lunæ.

DAYS, weeks, and months escape me, and nothing is done, nor is it possible for me to do any thing that demands study and attention in the present state of our family. I am the electrician; I am the escort into the garden; I am wanted, in short, on a hundred little occasions that occur every day in Mrs. Unwin's present state of infirmity; and I see no probability that I shall be less occupied in the same indispensable duties for a long time to come. The time fixed in your proposals for publication meanwhile steals on; and I have lately felt my engagement for Milton bear upon my spirits with a pressure which, added to the pressure of some other private concerns, is almost more than they are equal to. Tell me if you expect to be punctual to your assignation with the public, and that the artists will be ready with their part of the business so soon as the spring of 94? I cannot bear to be waited for, neither shall I be able to perform my part of the work with any success if I am hunted; and I ask this question thus early lest my own distress should increase, and should ultimately

prove a distress to you. My translations are finished, and when I have finished also the revisal of them, will be, I believe, tolerably well executed. They shall be heartily at your service, if by this unhappy interception my time should be so shortened as to forbid my doing more.

Your speedy answer will oblige yours affectionately,

WM. COWPER.

There is one Richard Coleman in the world, whom I have educated from an infant, and who is utterly good for nothing; but he is at present in great trouble, the fruit of his own folly. I send him, by this post, an order upon you for eight guineas.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 15, 1792.

THE progress of the old nurse in Terence is very much like the progress of my poor patient in the road of recovery. I cannot indeed say that she moves, but advances not, for advances are certainly made, but the progress of a week is hardly perceptible. I know not therefore at present what to say about this long postponed journey. The utmost that it is safe for me to say at this moment is this—You know that you are dear to us both; true it is that you are so, and equally true that the very instant we feel ourselves at liberty we will fly to Eartham. I have been but once within the Hall door since the Courtenays came home, much as I have been pressed to dine there, and have hardly escaped giving a little offence by declining it; but

though I should offend all the world by my obstinacy in this instance, I would not leave my poor Mary alone. Johnny serves me as a representative, and him I send without scruple. As to the affair of Milton, I know not what will become of it. I wrote to Johnson a week since to tell him that the interruption of Mrs. Unwin's illness still continuing, and being likely to continue, I know not when I should be able to proceed. The translations (I said) were finished, except the revisal of a part.

God bless your dear little boy and poet! I thank him for exercising his dawning genius upon me, and shall be still happier to thank him in person.

> Abbot is painting me so true,
> That (trust me) you would stare,
> And hardly know, at the first view,
> If I were here or there.

I have sat twice; and the few, who have seen his copy of me, are much struck with the resemblance. He is a sober, quiet man, which, considering that I must have him at least a week longer for an inmate, is a great comfort to me.

My Mary sends you her best love. She can walk now, leaning on my arm only, and her speech is certainly much improved. I long to see you. Why cannot you and dear Tom spend the remainder of the summer with us? We might then all set off for Eartham merrily together. But I retract this, conscious that I am unreasonable. It is a wretched world, and what we would, is almost always what we cannot.

Adieu! Love me, and be sure of a return.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, Weston Underwood, July 21, 1792.

I AM crazed with having much to do and doing nothing. Every thing with me has fallen into arrear to such a degree that I almost despair of being able by the utmost industry to redeem the time that I have lost. With difficulty it is that I can steal even now a moment to address a few lines to thee. They must be as few as I can make them. Briefly therefore I say thus:

My portrait is nearly finished, an excellent one in my mind, and in the opinion of all who see it both for drawing and likeness. It will be completed I believe on Monday. I shall keep it a short time after Abbot is gone, that my two or three friends in this neighbourhood may be gratified with a sight of it, and shall then send it to his house in Caroline Street, Bloomsbury, where it will remain some time. Should it be your wish to view it, you will then have an opportunity, and trust me I think it will afford you as much pleasure, nay, perhaps even more than a sight of the original myself; for you will see it with this thought in your mind, that whether I live or die, while this picture subsists, my charming lineaments and proportions can never be forgotten.

We have not even yet determined absolutely on our journey to Eartham, but shall I believe in two or three days decide in favour of it. Hayley intends himself so much in it, and I am persuaded that it will fair to do us both so much good, that I am sincerely desirous of going. A thousand [illegible] and

giants are in the way, but perhaps they will all vanish if I have but the courage to face them. Mrs. Unwin, whose weakness might justify her fears, has none. Her trust in the providence of God makes her calm on all occasions.

Should Anonymous have consigned his half year's remittance to your hands, and my namesake William his annual one, thou canst not do better than send them, for I hear a flying rumour that travelling is costly, and that consequently money will be wanted. This moment I receive yours, many thanks for it, and for the draft contained in it.

I learned lately from Sephus that you are not very well, and know you too well not to know that you hide from me the worst half of your malady, let it be what it may. God preserve thee, restore thy health, and give us a comfortable meeting once more in the winter.

Sam's wife shall be paid. Mrs. Unwin sends her best love. Johnny goes to Eartham, but not with us, because Sam will be more useful by the way. Johnny, therefore, and Nanny Roberts will jog together in the stage. You shall hear from me as soon as I can after my arrival.

Adieu—must go to be painted—can't add another syllable, except that I am ever thine,

WM. COWPER.

P. S. My dear Johnny sends his affectionate compliments. He goes with us;—all in a coach together, which Abbot will send us from town. To-morrow will be my last sitting, and I verily think the portrait, ex-

clusive of the likeness, which is the closest imaginable, one of the best I ever saw. You will see by this P. S. that the journey is already determined on. Would to heaven that you could join us!

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR MR. BULL, July 25, 1792.

ENGAGED as I have been ever since I saw you, it was not possible that I should write sooner; and busy as I am at present, it is not without difficulty that I can write even now: but I promised you a letter, and must endeavour, at least, to be as good as my word. How do you imagine I have been occupied these last ten days? In sitting, not on cockatrice eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humour, nor because I was too sick to move; but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would, therefore, bring a painter from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days; and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over. You have now, I know, a burning curiosity to learn two things, which I may choose whether I will tell you or not. First, who was the painter; and secondly, how he has succeeded. The painter's name is Abbot. You never heard of him, you say. It is very likely; but there is, nevertheless, such a painter, and an excellent one he is. *Multa sunt quæ bonus Bernardus nec vidit, nec audivit.* To your second enquiry I answer, that he has succeeded to admiration. The likeness is so strong, that

when my friends enter the room where my picture is, they start, astonished to see me where they know I am not. Miserable man that you are, to be at Brighton instead of being here, to contemplate this prodigy of art, which, therefore, you can never see; for it goes to London next Monday, to be suspended awhile at Abbot's; and then proceeds into Norfolk, where it will be suspended for ever.

But the picture is not the only prodigy I have to tell you of. A greater belongs to me; and one that you will hardly credit, even on my own testimony. We are on the eve of a journey, and a long one. On this very day se'nnight we set out for Eartham, the seat of my brother bard, Mr. Hayley, on the other side of London, nobody knows where, a hundred and twenty miles off. Pray for us, my friend, that we may have a safe going and return. It is a tremendous exploit, and I feel a thousand anxieties when I think of it. But a promise, made to him when he was here, that we would go if we could, and a sort of persuasion that we can if we will, oblige us to it. The journey and the change of air, together with the novelty to us of the scene to which we are going, may, I hope, be useful to us both; especially to Mrs. Unwin, who has most need of restoratives. She sends her love to you and to Thomas, in which she is sincerely joined by

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. THOMAS CARWARDINE, EARL'S COLN PRIORY, NEAR HALSTEAD, ESSEX.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, July 27, 1792.

I HAVE a short moment in which to tell you, according to your kind request, that we leave Weston and set off for Eartham on Wednesday, the 1st of August. Our route will lie through Kingston, Ripley, and Petworth, for such are the directions I have just received from our dear friend Hayley. In what part of it we shall be nearest to you, is better known to yourself than to me, and there is no part of it in which I shall not be happy to have a glimpse of you. I wish I could be so exact as to have the day and the hour of our probable arrival at every stage, but our rate of travelling must depend altogether on Mrs. Unwin's ability, which renders such precision impossible. In the hope that we may meet somewhere, I remain, my dear Sir,

Much yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. MR. GREATHEED.

MY DEAR SIR, Eartham, Aug. 6, 1792.

HAVING first thanked you for your affectionate and acceptable letter, I will proceed, as well as I can, to answer your equally affectionate request that I would send you early news of our arrival at Eartham. Here we are in the most elegant mansion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure grounds that I have ever seen; but which, dissi-

pated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape bounded by the sea, and in one part of it by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library in which I am writing.

It pleased God to carry us both through the journey with far less difficulty and inconvenience than I expected. I began it indeed with a thousand fears, and when we arrived the first evening at Barnet, found myself oppressed in spirit to a degree that could hardly be exceeded. I saw Mrs. Unwin weary, as she might well be, and heard such a variety of noises, both within the house and without, that I concluded she would get no rest. But I was mercifully disappointed. She rested, though not well, yet sufficiently; and when we finished our next day's journey at Ripley, we were both in better condition, both of body and mind, than on the day preceding. At Ripley we found a quiet inn, that housed, as it happened, that night, no company but ourselves. There we slept well, and rose perfectly refreshed. And except some terrors that I felt at passing over the Sussex hills by moonlight, met with little to complain of till we arrived about ten o'clock at Eartham. Here we are as happy as it is in the power of terrestrial good to make us. It is almost a Paradise in which we dwell; and our reception has been the kindest that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive. Our host mentions you with great respect, and bids me tell you that he esteems you

highly. Mrs. Unwin, who is, I think, in some points, already the better for her excursion, unites with mine her best compliments both to yourself and Mrs. Greatheed. I have much to see and enjoy before I can be perfectly apprised of all the delights of Eartham, and will therefore now subscribe myself,

Yours, my dear Sir,
With great sincerity,

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

MY DEAREST CATHARINA, Eartham, Aug. 12, 1792.

THOUGH I have travelled far, nothing did I see in my travels that surprised me half so agreeably as your kind letter; for high as my opinion of your good nature is, I had no hopes of hearing from you till I should have written first;—a pleasure which I intended to allow myself the first opportunity.

After three days confinement in a coach, and suffering as we went all that could be suffered from excessive heat and dust, we found ourselves late in the evening at the door of our friend Hayley. In every other respect the journey was extremely pleasant. At the Mitre in Barnet, where we lodged the first evening, we found our friend Mr. Rose, who had walked thither from his house in Chancery Lane to meet us; and at Kingston, where we dined the second day, I found my old and much valued friend General Cowper, whom I had not seen in thirty years, and but for this journey should never have seen again. Mrs. Unwin, on whose account I had a thousand fears before we set out, suf-

fered as little from fatigue as myself, and begins I hope already to feel some beneficial effects from the air of Eartham, and the exercise that she takes in one of the most delightful pleasure-grounds in the world. They occupy three sides of a hill, lofty enough to command a view of the sea, which skirts the horizon to a length of many miles, with the Isle of Wight at the end of it. The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated, and enclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had, for my part, no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a Paradise; and his house is as elegant as his scenes are charming.

But think not, my dear Catharina, that amidst all these beauties I shall lose the remembrance of the peaceful, but less splendid Weston. Your precincts will be as dear to me as ever, when I return; though when that day will arrive I know not, our host being determined, as I plainly see, to keep us as long as possible. Give my best love to your husband. Thank him most kindly for his attention to the old bard of Greece, and pardon me that I do not send you now an epitaph for Fop. I am not sufficiently recollected to compose even a bagatelle at present; but in due time you shall receive it.

Hayley, who will some time or other, I hope, see you at Weston, is already prepared to love you both, and being passionately fond of music, longs much to hear you.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Eartham, August 14, 1792.

ROMNEY is here; it would add much to my happiness if you were of the party; I have prepared Hayley to think highly, that is justly of you, and the time I hope will come when you will supersede all need of my recommendation.

Mrs. Unwin gathers strength. I have indeed great hopes from the air and exercise which this fine season affords her opportunity to use, that ere we return she will be herself again.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Eartham, Aug. 16, 1792.

I MUST be shorter than I would be, and must scribble as fast as I can, being wanted by Romney, who is here, and to whom I am sitting for my picture.

Our journey, as I believe I told you in my last, was not undertaken without prayer, or without some reasonable ground of hope that God would prosper it. It has accordingly prospered hitherto, and was performed on Mrs. Unwin's part with much less fatigue than I expected. The first day's labours seemed to affect her most; for when we arrived at Barnet, where Mr. Rose met us, having walked thither for that purpose, her voice failed through weariness, and she could scarce articulate; but the next day's journey to Ripley she performed with much greater ease; and when we reached Eartham, on the evening of the third day, was as well and seemed almost as fresh as when we

set out. Thus it has pleased God to answer our prayers for a safe conveyance hither, and I have a hope that he will farther answer them, by making the air of this place, and the beautiful scenery of it, conducive to the renewal both of her health and spirits, and of mine. It is certain that we could hardly have travelled to a more delightful scene, or to a purer air. The garden, or rather pleasure-ground, is on a hill; the summit of which commands an extensive view of the sea, at nine miles distance, and of the Isle of Wight; and in a bower on that summit Mrs. Unwin and I were sitting when Samuel brought me your welcome letter. I thank you for it, and for your verses enclosed in it. Natural as they are, and free from all affectation of finery, we found them very affecting, and so did my friend Hayley afterward, to whom I lent them for his perusal.

Here Mrs. Unwin walks more than she did or could be persuaded to do at Weston; the cheerfulness naturally inspired by agreeable novelty, I suppose, is that which enables her to do it; and when she is weary she gets into a chaise drawn by Socket and little Hayley, and pushed behind either by me or my cousin Johnson; the motion of which differs indeed from that of walking, but on a rough gravel, such as this country affords, is hardly less beneficial.

Perhaps when I write again I shall be less hurried, though every day is crowded with employment. At present I can only add my best love and Mrs. Unwin's together, with Johnny's best compliments to yourself and Miss Catlett, and that I am, my dear friend,

Most truly yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Eartham, Aug. 18, 1792.

WISHES in this world are generally vain, and in the next we shall make none. Every day I wish you were of our party, knowing how happy you would be in a place where we have nothing to do but enjoy beautiful scenery, and converse agreeably.

Mrs. Unwin's health continues to improve; and even I, who was well when I came, find myself still better.

Yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Eartham, August 25, 1792.

WITHOUT waiting for an answer to my last, I send my dear Catharina the epitaph she desired, composed as well as I could compose it in a place where every object, being still new to me, distracts my attention, and makes me as awkward at verse as if I had never dealt in it. Here it is.

EPITAPH ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim.
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase—
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;

This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
"Yes (the indignant shade of Fop replies)—
And worn with vain pursuit Man also dies."

I am here, as I told you in my last, delightfully situated, and in the enjoyment of all that the most friendly hospitality can impart; yet do I neither forget Weston, nor my friends at Weston; on the contrary, I have at length, though much and kindly pressed to make a longer stay, determined on the day of our departure,—on the 17th of September we shall leave Eartham; four days will be necessary to bring us home again, for I am under a promise to General Cowper to dine with him on the way, which cannot be done comfortably, either to him or to ourselves, unless we sleep that night at Kingston.

The air of this place has been, I believe, beneficial to us both. I indeed was in tolerable health before I set out, but have acquired since I came both a better appetite, and a knack of sleeping almost as much in a single night as formerly in two. Whether double quantities of that article will be favourable to me as a poet, time must show. About myself, however, I care little, being made of materials so tough, as not to threaten me even now, at the end of so many *lustrums*, with any thing like a speedy dissolution. My chief concern has been about Mrs. Unwin, and my chief comfort at this moment is, that she likewise has received, I hope, considerable benefit by the journey.

Tell my dear George that I begin to long to behold him again; and did it not savour of ingratitude to the friend, under whose roof I am so happy at present,

should be impatient to find myself once more under yours.

Adieu! my dear Catharina. I have nothing to add in the way of news, except that Romney has drawn me in crayons; by the suffrage of all here, extremely like.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Eartham, Aug. 26, 1792.

I KNOW not how it is, my dearest coz, but in a new scene, and surrounded by strange objects, I find my powers of thinking dissipated to a degree that makes it difficult to me even to write a letter, and even a letter to you; but such a letter as I can, I will, and have the fairest chance to succeed this morning, Hayley, Romney, Hayley's son, and Beau, being all gone together to the sea for bathing. The sea, you must know, is nine miles off, so that unless stupidity prevent, I shall have opportunity to write not only to you, but to poor Hurdis also, who is broken-hearted for the loss of his favourite sister, lately dead: and whose letter, giving an account of it, which I received yesterday, drew tears from the eyes of all our party. My only comfort respecting even yourself is, that you write in good spirits, and assure me that you are in a state of recovery; otherwise I should mourn not only for Hurdis, but for myself, lest a certain event should reduce me, and in a short time too, to a situation as distressing as his; for though nature designed you only for my cousin, you have had a sister's place in my affections every since I knew you. The reason is,

I suppose, that having no sister, the daughter of my own mother, I thought it proper to have one, the daughter of yours. Certain it is, that I can by no means afford to lose you; and that unless you will be upon honour with me, to give me always a true account of yourself, at least when we are not together, I shall always be unhappy, because always suspicious that you deceive me.

Now for ourselves. I am, without the least dissimulation, in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite and a double portion of sleep be advantageous, such are the advantages that I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind, which I have had these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here; and could I be translated to Paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us. So much for myself. Mrs. Unwin is evidently the better for her jaunt, though by no means as she was before this last attack; still wanting help when she would rise from her seat, and a support in walking; but she is able to use more exercise than she could at home, and moves with rather a less tottering step. God knows what he designs for me; but when I see those who are dearer to me than myself distempered and enfeebled, and myself as strong as in the days of my youth, I tremble for the solitude in which a few years may place me. I wish her and you to die before me, indeed, but not till I am more likely to follow immediately. Enough of this!

Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opi-

nion of all here with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible.

The 17th of September is the day on which I intend to leave Eartham. We shall then have been six weeks resident here; a holiday time long enough for a man who has much to do. And now farewell!

W. C.

P. S. Hayley, whose love for me seems to be truly that of a brother, has given me his picture, drawn by Romney about fifteen years ago;—an admirable likeness.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Eartham, Aug. 26, 1792.

YOUR kind but very affecting letter found me not at Weston, to which place it was directed, but in a bower of my friend Hayley's garden at Eartham, where I was sitting with Mrs. Unwin. We both knew the moment we saw it from whom it came; and observing a red seal, both comforted ourselves that all was well at Burwash: but we soon felt that we were called not to rejoice, but to mourn with you. We do indeed sincerely mourn with you; and if it will afford you any consolation to know it, you may be assured, that every eye here has testified what our hearts have suffered for you. Your loss is great, and your disposition I perceive such as exposes you to feel the whole weight of it. I will not add to your sorrow by a vain attempt to assuage it; your own good sense and the piety of your principles will, of course, suggest to you the most

powerful motives of acquiescence in the will of God. You will be sure to recollect that the stroke, severe as it is, is not the stroke of an enemy, but of a father; and will find I trust hereafter that like a father he has done you good by it. Thousands have been able to say, and myself as loud as any of them, it has been good for me that I was afflicted; but time is necessary to work us to this persuasion, and in due time it shall be yours. Mr. Hayley, who tenderly sympathizes with you, has enjoined me to send you as pressing an invitation as I can frame, to join me at this place. I have every motive to wish your consent. Both your benefit and my own, which I believe would be abundantly answered by your coming, ought to make me eloquent in such a cause. Here you will find silence and retirement in perfection, when you would seek them; and here such company as I have no doubt would suit you; all cheerful, but not noisy; and all alike disposed to love you: you and I seem to have here a fair opportunity of meeting. It were a pity we should be in the same county, and not come together. I am here till the 17th of September, an interval that will afford you time to make the necessary arrangements, and to gratify me at last with an interview which I have long desired. Let me hear from you soon, that I may have double pleasure,—the pleasure of expecting, as well as that of seeing you.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, though still a sufferer by her last illness, is much better, and has received considerable benefit by the air of Eartham. She adds to mine her affectionate compliments, and joins me and Hayley in this invitation.

Mr. Romney is here, and a young man, a cousin of mine. I tell you who we are, that you may not be afraid of us.

Adieu! May the Comforter of all the afflicted who seek him, be yours. God bless you.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, Eartham, Sept. 9, 1792.

I DETERMINE, if possible, to send you one more letter, or at least, if possible, once more to send you something like one, before we leave Eartham. But I am in truth so unaccountably local in the use of my pen, that, like the man in the fable, who could leap well no where but at Rhodes, I seem incapable of writing at all, except at Weston. This is, as I have already told you, a delightful place; more beautiful scenery I have never beheld nor expect to behold; but the charms of it, uncommon as they are, have not in the least alienated my affections from Weston. The genius of that place suits me better,—it has an air of snug concealment, in which a disposition like mine feels itself peculiarly gratified; whereas here I see from every window woods like forests, and hills like mountains,—a wilderness, in short, that rather increases my natural melancholy, and which, were it not for the agreeables I find within, would soon convince me that mere change of place can avail me little. Accordingly, I have not looked out for a house in Sussex, nor shall.

The intended day of our departure continues to be the 17th. I hope to reconduct Mrs. Unwin to the

Lodge with her health considerably mended: but it is in the article of speech chiefly, and in her powers of walking, that she is sensible of much improvement. Her sight and her hand still fail her, so that she can neither read nor work; mortifying circumstances both to her, who is never willingly idle.

On the 18th I purpose to dine with the General, and to rest that night at Kingston; but the pleasure I shall have in the interview will hardly be greater than the pain I shall feel at the end of it, for we shall part probably to meet no more.

Johnny, I know, has told you that Mr. Hurdis is here. Distressed by the loss of his sister, he has renounced the place where she died for ever, and is about to enter on a new course of life at Oxford. You would admire him much. He is gentle in his manners, and delicate in his person, resembling our poor friend Unwin, both in face and figure, more than any one I have ever seen. But he has not, at least he has not at present, his vivacity.

I have corresponded since I came here with Mrs. Courtenay, and had yesterday a very kind letter from her.

Adieu, my dear; may God bless you. Write to me as soon as you can after the 20th. I shall then be at Weston, and indulging myself in the hope that I shall ere long see you there also.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

The Sun, at Kingston,
MY DEAR BROTHER, Sept. 18, 1792.

WITH no sinister accident to retard or terrify us, we find ourselves, at a quarter before one, arrived safe at Kingston. I left you with a heavy heart, and with a heavy heart took leave of our dear Tom, at the bottom of the chalk-hill. But soon after this last separation, my troubles gushed from my eyes, and then I was better.

We must now prepare for our visit to the General. I add no more, therefore, than our dearest remembrances and prayers that God may bless you and yours, and reward you an hundredfold for all your kindness. Tell Tom I shall always hold him dear for his affectionate attentions to Mrs. Unwin. From her heart the memory of him can never be erased. Johnny loves you all, and has his share in all these acknowledgments.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, Weston, Sept. 21, 1792.

CHAOS himself, even the chaos of Milton, is not surrounded with more confusion, nor has a mind more completely in a hubbub, than I experience at the present moment. At our first arrival, after long absence, we find an hundred orders to servants necessary, a thousand things to be restored to their proper places, and an endless variety of minutiæ to be adjusted;

which, though individually of little importance, are most momentous in the aggregate. In these circumstances I find myself so indisposed to writing, that save to yourself I would on no account attempt it; but to you I will give such a recital as I can of all that has passed since I sent you that short note from Kingston, knowing that if it be a perplexed recital, you will consider the cause, and pardon it. I will begin with a remark, in which I am inclined to think you will agree with me, that there is sometimes more true heroism passing in a corner, and on occasions that make no noise in the world, than has often been exercised by those whom that world esteems her greatest heroes, and on occasions the most illustrious; I hope so at least; for all the heroism I have to boast, and all the opportunities I have of displaying any, are of a private nature. After writing the note I immediately began to prepare for my appointed visit to Ham; but the struggles that I had with my own spirit, labouring as I did under the most dreadful dejection, are never to be told. I would have given the world to have been excused. I went, however, and carried my point against myself with a heart riven asunder. I have reasons for all this anxiety, which I cannot relate now. The visit, however, passed off well, and we returned in the dark to Kingston. I with a lighter heart than I had known since my departure from Eartham,—and Mary too, for she had suffered hardly less than myself, and chiefly on my account. That night we rested well in our inn, and at twenty minutes after eight next morning set off for London; exactly at ten we reached Mr. Rose's door; we drank a dish

of chocolate with him, and proceeded, Mr. Rose riding with us as far as St. Alban's. From this time we met with no impediment. In the dark, and in a storm, at eight at night, we found ourselves at our own back door. Mrs. Unwin was very near slipping out of the chair in which she was taken from the chaise, but at last was landed safe. We all have had a good night, and are all well this morning.

God bless you, my dearest brother.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, Weston, Oct. 2, 1792.

A BAD night, succeeded by an east wind, and a sky all in sables, have such an effect on my spirits, that if I did not consult my own comfort more than yours, I should not write to-day, for I shall not entertain you much; yet your letter, though containing no very pleasant tidings, has afforded me some relief. It tells me, indeed, that you have been dispirited yourself, and that poor little Tom, the faithful squire of my Mary, has been seriously indisposed: all this grieves me; but then there is a warmth of heart and a kindness in it, that do me good. I will endeavour not to repay you in notes of sorrow and despondence, though all my sprightly chords seem broken. In truth, one day excepted, I have not seen the day when I have been cheerful, since I left you. My spirits, I think, are almost constantly lower than they were; the approach of winter is perhaps the cause; and if it is, I have nothing better to expect for a long time to come.

Yesterday was a day of assignation with myself, the day of which I said some days before it came, when that day comes I will begin my dissertations. Accordingly when it came I prepared to do so; filled a letter-case with fresh paper, furnished myself with a pretty good pen, and replenished my ink-bottle; but partly from one cause, and partly from another, chiefly however from distress and dejection, after writing and obliterating about six lines, in the composition of which I spent near an hour, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt. An attempt so unsuccessful could have no other effect than to dishearten me; and it has had that effect to such a degree that I know not when I shall find courage to make another. At present I shall certainly abstain, since at present I cannot well afford to expose myself to the danger of a fresh mortification.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 13, 1792.

I BEGAN a letter to you yesterday, my dearest brother, and proceeded through two sides of the sheet; but so much of my nervous fever found its way into it, that looking it over this morning I determined not to send it.

I have risen, though not in good spirits, yet in better than I generally do of late, and therefore will not address you in the melancholy tone that belongs to my worst feelings.

I began to be restless about your portrait, and to

say, How long shall I have to wait for it? I wished it here for many reasons: the sight of it will be a comfort to me, for I not only love, but am proud of you, as of a conquest made in my old age. Johnny goes to town on Monday, on purpose to call on Romney, to whom he shall give all proper information concerning its conveyance hither. The name of a man, whom I esteem as I do Romney, ought not to be unmusical in my ears; but his name will be so, till I shall have paid him a debt justly due to him, by doing such poetical honours to it as I intend. Heaven knows when that intention will be executed, for the Muse is still as obdurate and as coy as ever.

Your kind postscript is just arrived, and gives me great pleasure. When I cannot see you myself, it seems some comfort however that you have been seen by another known to me; and who will tell me in a few days that he has seen you. Your wishes to disperse my melancholy would, I am sure, prevail, did that event depend on the warmth and sincerity with which you frame them: but it has baffled both wishes and prayers, and those the most fervent that could be made, so many years, that the case seems hopeless. But no more of this at present.

Your verses to Austin are as sweet as the honey that they accompany;—kind, friendly, witty, and elegant. When shall I be able to do the like? Perhaps when my Mary, like your Tom, shall cease to be an invalid, I may recover a power at least to do something. I sincerely rejoice in the dear little man's restoration. My Mary continues, I hope, to mend a little.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM, Oct. 14, 1792.

YOUR kind enquiries after mine and Mrs. Unwin's health will not permit me to be silent, though I am and have long been so indisposed to writing, that even a letter has almost overtasked me.

Your last but one found me on the point of setting out for Sussex, whither I went with Mrs. Unwin, on a visit to my friend Mr. Hayley. We spent six weeks at Eartham, and returned on the 20th of September. I had hopes that change of air and change of scene might be serviceable both to my poor invalid and me. She, I hope, has received some benefit; and I am not the worse for it myself; but, at the same time, must acknowledge that I cannot boast of much amendment. The time we spent there could not fail to pass as agreeably as her weakness, and my spirits, at a low ebb, would permit. Hayley is one of the most agreeable men, as well as one of the most cordial friends. His house is elegant; his library large, and well chosen; and he is surrounded by the most delightful scenery. But I have made the experiment only to prove, what indeed I knew before, that creatures are physicians of little value, and that health and cure are from God only. Henceforth, therefore, I shall wait for those blessings from Him, and expect them at no other hand. In the mean time, I have the comfort to be able to tell you that Mrs. Unwin, on the whole, is restored beyond the most sanguine expectations I had when I wrote last; and that, as to myself, it is not much otherwise with me than it has been these twenty

years; except that this season of the year is always unfavourable to my spirits.

I rejoice that you have had the pleasure of another interview with Mr. Martyn; and am glad that the trifles I have sent you afforded him any amusement. This letter has already given you to understand that I am at present no artificer of verse, and that, consequently, I have nothing new to communicate. When I have, I shall do it to none more readily than to yourself.

My dear madam,

Very affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 18, 1792.

I THOUGHT that the wonder had been all on my side, having been employed in wondering at your silence, as long as you at mine. Soon after our arrival at Eartham, I received a letter from you, which I answered, if not by the return of the post, at least in a day or two. Not that I should have insisted on the ceremonial of letter for letter, during so long a period, could I have found leisure to double your debt; but while there, I had no opportunity for writing, except now and then a short one; for we breakfasted early, studied Milton as soon as breakfast was over, and continued in that employment till Mrs. Unwin came forth from her chamber, to whom all the rest of my time was necessarily devoted. Our return to Weston was on the 19th of last month, according to your information. You will naturally think that, in the interval, I must

have had sufficient leisure to give you notice of our safe arrival. But the fact has been otherwise. I have neither been well myself, nor is Mrs. Unwin, though better, so much improved in her health, as not still to require my continual assistance. My disorder has been the old one, to which I have been subject so many years, and especially about this season,—a nervous fever; not, indeed, so oppressive as it has sometimes proved, but sufficiently alarming both to Mrs. Unwin and myself, and such as made it neither easy nor proper for me to make much use of my pen while it continued. At present I am tolerably free from it,—a blessing for which I believe myself partly indebted to the use of James's powder, in small quantities; and partly to a small quantity of laudanum, taken every night; but chiefly to a manifestation of God's presence vouchsafed to me a few days since; transient, indeed, and dimly seen, through a mist of many fears and troubles, but sufficient to convince me, at least while the enemy's power is a little restrained, that He has not cast me off for ever.

Our visit was a pleasant one,—as pleasant as Mrs. Unwin's weakness, and the state of my spirits, never very good, would allow. As to my own health, I never expected that it would be much improved by the journey; nor have I found it so. Some benefit, indeed, I hoped, and perhaps a little more than I found. But the season was, after the first fortnight, extremely unfavourable,—stormy and wet; and the prospects, though grand and magnificent, yet rather of a melancholy cast, and consequently not very propitious to me. The cultivated appearance of Weston

suits my frame of mind far better than wild hills that aspire to be mountains, covered with vast unfrequented woods, and here and there affording a peep between their summits at the distant ocean. Within doors all was hospitality and kindness, but the scenery *would* have its effect; and though delightful in the extreme to those who had spirits to bear it, was too gloomy for me.

Mrs. Unwin performed the journey, both going and returning, better than I had hoped she could. With an arm to lean upon she walks pretty well, though still with a step that totters when she turns; neither can she yet read without poring more than is good for her, or use her needles. But her looks are greatly improved, and her speech, especially in the earlier part of the day, is as strong and articulate as ever.

We are glad that the ducks arrived safe. A couple were likewise sent a little before our departure for Sussex, which we hope arrived safe also. I must now to breakfast;—and with Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances and thanks for your kind mention of her in your letter, conclude myself yours,

My dear friend,
Most sincerely,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, Oct. 19, 1792.

YOU are too useful when you are here not to be missed on a hundred occasions daily; and too much domesticated with us not to be regretted always. I hope,

therefore, that your month or six weeks will not be like many that I have known,—capable of being drawn out into any length whatever, and productive of nothing but disappointment.

I have done nothing since you went, except that I have composed the better half of a sonnet to Romney; yet even this ought to bear an earlier date, for I began to be haunted with a desire to do it long before we came out of Sussex, and have daily attempted it ever since.

It would be well for the reading part of the world, if the writing part were, many of them, as dull as I am. Yet even this small produce, which my steril intellect has hardly yielded at last, may serve to convince you that in point of spirits I am not worse.

In fact, I am a little better. The powders and the laudanum together have, for the present at least, abated the fever that consumes them; and in measure as the fever abates, I acquire a less discouraging view of things, and with it a little power to exert myself.

In the evenings I read Baker's Chronicle to Mrs. Unwin, having no other history, and hope in time to be as well versed in it as his admirer Sir Roger de Coverley.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOHNNY, Weston, Oct. 22, 1792.

HERE am I with I know not how many letters to answer, and no time to do it in. I exhort you, therefore, to set a proper value on this, as proving your

priority in my attentions, though in other respects likely to be of little value.

You do well to sit for your picture, and give very sufficient reasons for doing it; you will also, I doubt not, take care that when future generations shall look at it, some spectator or other shall say, This is the picture of a good man, and a useful one.

And now God bless you, my dear Johnny. I proceed much after the old rate;—rising cheerless and distressed in the morning, and brightening a little as the day goes on.

Adieu,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 28, 1792.

NOTHING done, my dearest brother, nor likely to be done at present; yet I purpose in a day or two to make another attempt, to which however I shall address myself with fear and trembling, like a man who, having sprained his wrist, dreads to use it. I have not indeed, like such a man, injured myself by any extraordinary exertion, but seem as much enfeebled as if I had. The consciousness that there is so much to do and nothing done, is a burthen I am not able to bear. Milton especially is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost, as goaded with such continual reproaches for neglecting him. I will therefore begin; I will do my best; and if, after all, that best prove good for nothing, I will even send the notes, worthless as they are, that I have made already;

a measure very disagreeable to myself, and to which nothing but necessity shall compel me. I shall rejoice to see those new samples of your biography, which you give me to expect.

Allons! Courage!—Here comes something however,—produced after a gestation as long as that of a pregnant woman. It is the debt long unpaid; the compliment due to Romney; and if it has your approbation I will send it, or you may send it for me. I must premise, however, that I intended nothing less than a sonnet when I began. I know not why, but I said to myself it shall not be a sonnet; accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half a dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last. The fates would have it so[1].

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Nov. 9, 1792.

I WISH that I were as industrious, and as much occupied as you, though in a different way; but it is not so with me. Mrs. Unwin's great debility, (who is not yet able to move without assistance,) is of itself a hinderance such as would effectually disable me. Till she can work and read, and fill up her time as usual, (all which is at present entirely out of her power,) I may now and then find time to write a letter, but I shall write nothing more. I cannot sit with my pen in

[1] Here followed the Sonnet to George Romney, Esq.

my hand, and my books before me, while she is in effect in solitude, silent, and looking at the fire. To this hinderance that other has been added, of which you are already aware,—a want of spirits, such as I have never known, when I was not absolutely laid by, since I commenced an author. How long I shall be continued in these uncomfortable circumstances is known only to Him who, as he will, disposes of us all. I may be yet able perhaps to prepare the first book of the Paradise Lost for the press, before it will be wanted; and Johnson himself seems to think there will be no haste for the second. But poetry is my favourite employment, and all my poetical operations are in the mean time suspended; for while a work to which I have bound myself remains unaccomplished I can do nothing else.

Johnson's plan of prefixing my phiz to the new edition of my Poems is by no means a pleasant one to me, and so I told him in a letter I sent him from Eartham, in which I assured him that my objections to it would not be easily surmounted. But if you judge that it may really have an effect in advancing the sale, I would not be so squeamish as to suffer the spirit of prudery to prevail in me to his disadvantage. Somebody told an author, I forget whom, that there was more vanity in refusing his picture, than in granting it; on which he instantly complied. I do not perfectly feel all the force of the argument, but it shall content me that he did.

I do most sincerely rejoice in the success of your publication, and have no doubt that my prophecy concerning your success in greater matters will be fulfilled.

We are naturally pleased when our friends approve what we approve ourselves; how much then must I be pleased, when you speak so kindly of Johnny! I know him to be all that you think him, and love him entirely.

Adieu! We expect you at Christmas, and shall therefore rejoice when Christmas comes. Let nothing interfere.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 11, 1792.

I AM not so insensible of your kindness in making me an exception from the number of your correspondents, to whom you forbid the hope of hearing from you till your present labours are ended, as to make you wait longer for an answer to your last; which, indeed, would have had its answer before this time, had it been possible for me to write. But so many have demands upon me of a similar kind, and while Mrs. Unwin continues an invalid, my opportunities of writing are so few, that I am constrained to incur a long arrear to some, with whom I would wish to be punctual. She can at present neither work nor read; and till she can do both, and amuse herself as usual, my own amusements of the pen must be suspended.

I, like you, have a work before me, and a work to which I should be glad to address myself in earnest, but cannot do it at present. When the opportunity comes, I shall, like you, be under a necessity of interdicting

some of my usual correspondents, and of shortening my letters to the excepted few. Many letters and much company are incompatible with authorship, and the one as much as the other. It will be long, I hope, before the world is put in possession of a publication, which you design should be posthumous.

Oh for the day when your expectations of my complete deliverance shall be verified! At present it seems very remote: so distant, indeed, that hardly the faintest streak of it is visible in my horizon. The glimpse with which I was favoured about a month since, has never been repeated; and the depression of my spirits has. The future appears gloomy as ever; and I seem to myself to be scrambling always in the dark, among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at my heels, prepared to push me headlong. Thus I have spent twenty years, but thus I shall not spend twenty years more. Long ere that period arrives, the grand question concerning my everlasting weal or woe will be decided. A question that seems to have interested the enemy of mankind peculiarly, for against none, so far as I have learned by reading or otherwise, has he ever manifested such fury as I have experienced at his hands; yet all that I have felt is little in comparison with what he often threatens me, so that even God's omnipotence to save is a consideration that affords me no comfort, while I seem to have a foe omnipotent to destroy. This may appear to you a strange language, yet is it not altogether unwarranted by Scripture. Tell me who are the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places spoken of by Saint Paul? Against them we have to

war; and they cannot be the angels who have fallen from their first estate, for they are said to have been long since thrust down into perdition, and to be bound in chains of darkness until the judgement of the great day. I recollect, and so do you perhaps, what was the opinion of Dr. Conyers on this subject, and it will be a pleasure to me to know yours. If my enemy's testimony could weigh with you as much as it does sometimes with me, you would not hesitate long in your answer, for he has a thousand times in my hearing boasted himself supreme.

Adieu, my dear friend, I have exhausted my time though not filled my paper. Our united thanks are due for some excellent skait, and with our united affectionate remembrances to yourself and Miss Catlett, I remain,

Truly yours,

WM. COWPER.

I enclose Nat's receipt. The fourpence purchased a loaf for a hungry pauper.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, Nov. 20, 1792.

I GIVE you many thanks for your rhymes, and for your verses without rhyme; for your poetical dialogue between wood and stone; between Homer's head and the head of Samuel; kindly intended, I know well, for my amusement, and that amused me much.

The successor of the clerk defunct, for whom I used to write mortuary verses, arrived here this morning,

with a recommendatory letter from Joe Rye, and an humble petition of his own, entreating me to assist him as I had assisted his predecessor. I have undertaken the service, although with no little reluctance, being involved in many arrears on other subjects, and having very little dependence at present on my ability to write at all. I proceed exactly as when you were here—a letter now and then before breakfast, and the rest of my time all holiday; if holiday it may be called, that is spent chiefly in moping and musing, and "*forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils.*"

The fever on my spirits has harassed me much, and I have never had so good a night, nor so quiet a rising, since you went, as on this very morning. A relief that I account particularly seasonable and propitious, because I had, in my intentions, devoted this morning to you, and could not have fulfilled those intentions, had I been as spiritless as I generally am.

I am glad that Johnson is in no haste for Milton, for I seem myself not likely to address myself presently to that concern, with any prospect of success; yet something now and then, like a secret whisper, assures and encourages me that it will yet be done.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 25, 1792.

How shall I thank you enough for the interest you take in my future Miltonic labours, and the assistance you promise me in the performance of them? I will some time or other, if I live, and live a poet, acknow-

ledge your friendship in some of my best verse; the most suitable return one poet can make to another; in the mean time, I love you, and am sensible of all your kindness. You wish me warm in my work, and I ardently wish the same; but when I shall be so, God only knows. My melancholy, which seemed a little alleviated for a few days, has gathered about me again, with as black a cloud as ever; the consequence is absolute incapacity to begin.

I was for some years dirge writer to the town of Northampton, being employed by the clerk of the principal parish there, to furnish him with an annual copy of verses proper to be printed at the foot of his bill of mortality; but the clerk died, and hearing nothing for two years from his successor, I well hoped that I was out of my office. The other morning, however Sam announced the new clerk; he came to solicit the same service as I had rendered his predecessor, and I reluctantly complied; doubtful, indeed, whether I was capable. I have however achieved that labour, and I have done nothing more. I am just sent for up to Mary, dear Mary! Adieu! she is as well as when I left you, I would I could say better. Remember us both affectionately to your sweet boy, and trust me for being

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Dec. 1, 1792.

I AM truly glad, my dearest coz, that the waters of Cheltenham have done thee good, and wish ardently that those of Bath may establish thy health, and prove the means of prolonging it many years, even till thou shalt become what thou wast called at a very early age, an old wench indeed. I have been a *pauvre miserable* ever since I came from Eartham, and was little better while there, so that whatever motive may incline me to travel again hereafter, it will not be the hope that my spirits will be much the better for it. Neither was Mrs. Unwin's health so much improved by that frisk of ours into Sussex, as I had hoped and expected. She is, however, tolerably well, but very far indeed from having recovered the effects of her last disorder.

My birthday (the sixty-first that I have numbered) has proved for once a propitious day to me, for on that day my spirits began to mend, my nights became less hideous, and my days have been such of course.

I have heard nothing from Joseph, and having been always used to hear from him in November, am reduced to the dire necessity of supposing with you that he is heinously offended. Being in want of money, however, I wrote to him yesterday, and a letter which ought to produce a friendly answer; but whether it will or not is an affair, at present, of great uncertainty. Walter Bagot is offended too, and wonders that I would have any connexion with so bad a man as the author of the Essay on Old Maids must necessarily be! Poor

man! he has five sisters, I think, in that predicament, which makes *his* resentment rather excusable. Joseph, by the way, has two, and perhaps may be proportionally influenced by that consideration. Should that be the case, I have nothing left to do but to wish them all good husbands, since the reconciliation of my two friends seems closely connected with that contingency.

In making the first advances to your sister you have acted like yourself, that is to say like a good and affectionate sister, and will not, I hope, lose your reward. Rewarded in another world you will be, no doubt, but I should hope that you will be not altogether unrecompensed in this. Thou hast a heart, I know, that cannot endure to be long at enmity with any one, and were I capable of using thee never so ill, I am sure that in time you would sue to me for a pardon. Thou dost not want fire, but meekness is predominant in thee.

I was never so idle in my life, and never had so much to do. God knows when this will end, but I think of bestirring myself soon, and of putting on my Miltonic trammels once again. That once done, I shall not, I hope, put them off till the work is finished. I have written nothing lately but a sonnet to Romney, and a mortuary copy of verses for the town of Northampton, having been applied to by the new clerk for that purpose.

Johnson designs handsomely; you must pardon Johnson, and receive him into your best graces. He purposes to publish, together with my Homer, a new edition of my two volumes of Poems, and to make me

a present of the entire profits. They are to be handsome quartos, with an engraving of Abbott's picture of me prefixed. I have left myself neither time nor room for politics.

The French are a vain and childish people, and conduct themselves on this grand occasion with a levity and extravagance nearly akin to madness; but it would have been better for Austria and Prussia to let them alone. All nations have a right to choose their own mode of government, and the sovereignty of the people is a doctrine that evinces itself; for whenever the people choose to be masters they always are so, and none can hinder them. God grant that we may have no revolution here, but unless we have a reform, we certainly shall. Depend upon it, my dear, the hour is come when power founded in patronage and corrupt majorities must govern this land no longer. Concessions too must be made to dissenters of every denomination. They have a right to them, a right to all the privileges of Englishmen, and sooner or later, by fair means or by force, they will have them.

Adieu, my dearest coz, I have only time to add Mrs. U.'s most affectionate remembrances, and to conclude myself,

Ever thine,

WM. COWPER.

Mr. and Mrs. Rose come on the twenty-second, and Johnny with them; the former to stay ten days. It is strange that any body should suspect Mr. Smith of having been assisted by me. None writes more rapidly or more correctly—twenty pages in a morning, which

I have often read and heard read at night, and found not a word to alter. This moment comes a very kind letter from Joseph. Sephus tells me I may expect to see very soon the strongest assurances from the people of property, of every description, to support the King and present constitution. In this I do most sincerely rejoice as you will. He wishes to know my political opinions, and he shall most truly.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 9, 1792.

THE opinion I bolted in my last, and in which I foresaw how much we should differ, is no new one with me, nor a symptom of any extraordinary dejection. I have entertained it these twenty years, and doubt not that it will accompany me to my last moments; my reasons for it are chiefly such as I collect from my own experience, and being such, are incommunicable to others, at least in the full force of them. I must be contented therefore to be singular. I could argue much in favour of it also from another passage or two of Scripture than that to which I alluded, but it is not worth while. Could I convince all the world of the truth of it, no good would ensue to any body, and in the meantime I know not that it is at all prejudicial to myself. If I perish, and I have long expected that finally I shall, it is no matter whether by a great enemy or a small one, whether gorged by a serpent of Africa thirty feet long, or by the bite of a viper.

Neither need you be uneasy on the subject of

Milton. I shall not find that labour too heavy for me, if I have health and leisure. The season of the year is unfavourable to me respecting the former; and Mrs. Unwin's present weakness allows me less of the latter than the occasion seems to call for. But the business is in no haste. The artists employed to furnish the embellishments are not likely to be very expeditious; and a small portion only of the work will be wanted from me at once; for the intention is to deal it out to the public piece-meal. I am, therefore, under no great anxiety on that account. It is not, indeed, an employment, that I should have chosen for myself; because poetry pleases and amuses me more, and would cost me less labour properly so called. All this I felt before I engaged with Johnson; and did, in the first instance, actually decline the service: but he was urgent; and, at last, I suffered myself to be persuaded.

The season of the year, as I have already said, is particularly adverse to me: yet not in itself, perhaps, more adverse than any other; but the approach of it always reminds me of the same season in the dreadful seventy-three, and in the more dreadful eighty-six. I cannot help terrifying myself with doleful misgivings and apprehensions; nor is the enemy negligent to seize all the advantage that the occasion gives him. Thus, hearing much from him, and having little or no sensible support from God, I suffer inexpressible things till January is over. And even then, whether increasing years have made me more liable to it, or despair, the longer it lasts, grows naturally darker, I find myself more inclined to melancholy than I was a

few years since. God only knows where this will end; but where it is likely to end, unless he interpose powerfully in my favour, all may know.

My opportunity will not serve me to write more. Mrs. Unwin is as well at least as when we came out of Sussex. She sends her affectionate remembrances, and a turkey, of which she desires your acceptance. It goes by the coach, was killed on Thursday morning, and may therefore either be eaten immediately or kept three or four days if you choose it. Our united compliments attend Miss Catlett, and I remain, my dear friend,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Dec. 16, 1792.

We differ so little, that it is pity we should not agree. The possibility of restoring our diseased government is, I think, the only point on which we are not of one mind. If you are right, and it cannot be touched in the medical way, without danger of absolute ruin to the constitution, keep the doctors at a distance, say I —and let us live as long as we can. But perhaps physicians might be found of skill sufficient for the purpose, were they but as willing as able. Who are they? Not those honest blunderers the mob, but our governors themselves. As it is in the power of any individual to be honest if he will, any body of men are, as it seems to me, equally possessed of the same option. For I can never persuade myself to think the

world so constituted by the author of it, and human society, which is his ordinance, so shabby a business, that the buying and selling of votes and consciences should be essential to its existence. As to multiplied representation, I know not that I foresee any great advantage likely to arise from that. Provided there be but a reasonable number of reasonable heads laid together for the good of the nation, the end may as well be answered by five hundred, as it would be by a thousand, and perhaps better. But then they should be honest as well as wise; and in order that they may be so, they should put it out of their own power to be otherwise. This they might certainly do, if they would; and would they do it, I am not convinced that any great mischief would ensue. You say, "somebody must have influence," but I see no necessity for it. Let integrity of intention and a due share of ability be supposed, and the influence will be in the right place, it will all centre in the zeal and good of the nation. That will influence their debates and decisions, and nothing else ought to do it. You will say perhaps that, wise men and honest men as they are supposed, they are yet liable to be split into almost as many differences of opinion as there are individuals: but I rather think not. It is observed of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, that each always approved and seconded the plans and views of the other; and the reason given for it is, that they were men of equal ability. The same cause that could make two unanimous, would make twenty so; and would at least secure a majority among as many hundreds. As to the reformation of the church,

I want none, unless by a better provision for the inferior clergy: and if that could be brought about by emaciating a little some of our too corpulent dignitaries, I should be well contented.

The dissenters, I think, catholics, and others, have all a right to the privileges of all other Englishmen, because to deprive them is persecution; and persecution on any account, but especially on a religious one, is an abomination. But after all, *valeat respublica*, I love my country, I love my king, and I wish peace and prosperity to Old England.

Adieu,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 26, 1792.

THAT I may not be silent till my silence alarms you, I snatch a moment to tell you that although *toujours triste* I am not worse than usual, but my opportunities of writing are *paucified*, as perhaps Dr. Johnson would have dared to say, and the few that I have are shortened by company.

Give my love to dear Tom, and thank him for his very apposite extract, which I should be happy indeed to turn to any account. How often do I wish, in the course of every day, that I could be employed once more in poetry, and how often of course that this Miltonic trap had never caught me! The year ninety-two shall stand chronicled in my remembrance as the most melancholy that I have ever known, except the few weeks that I spent at Eartham; and such it has

been principally, because being engaged to Milton, I felt myself no longer free for any other engagement. That ill-fated work, impracticable in itself, has made every thing else impracticable.

* * * I am very Pindaric, and obliged to be so by the hurry of the hour. My friends are come down to breakfast.

Adieu,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Jan. 6, 1795.

I SEIZE a passing moment merely to say that I feel for your distresses, and sincerely pity you; and I shall be happy to learn from your next, that your sister's amendment has superseded the necessity you feared of a journey to London. Your candid account of the effect that your afflictions have both on your spirits and temper I can perfectly understand, having laboured much in that fire myself, and perhaps more than any man. It is in such a school however that we must learn, if we ever truly learn it, the natural depravity of the human heart, and of our own in particular, together with the consequence that necessarily follows such wretched premises; our indispensable need of the atonement, and our inexpressible obligations to Him who made it. This reflection cannot escape a thinking mind, looking back on those ebullitions of fretfulness and impatience, to which it has yielded in a season of great affliction.

Having lately had company who left us only on the

fourth, I have done nothing indeed, since my return from Sussex, except a trifle or two, which it was incumbent upon me to write. Milton hangs in doubt, neither spirits nor opportunity suffice me for that labour. I regret continually that I ever suffered myself to be persuaded to undertake it. The most that I hope to effect is a complete revisal of my own Homer. Johnson told my friend, who has just left me, that it will begin to be reviewed in the next Analytical, and that he *hoped* the review of it would not offend me. By this I understand that if I am not offended, it will be owing more to my own equanimity, than to the mildness of the critic. So be it! He will put an opportunity of victory over myself into my hands, and I will endeavour not to lose it!

Adieu!

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 19, 1793.

SUFFICIENTLY apprized beforehand that my letter would not be worth more, I have waited till you might have it for a groat; arriving on Monday, I conclude that it will find you in N. N. Street, and will find you I hope much improved in your health by the trip that you have made to Bath. On no other terms shall I fail to hate the place that has deprived us of your company. You know not what you lose by being absent from Weston at this moment. We have just received from Johnny a cask of the best Holland gin, and in a few days I shall receive from Charlotte Smith

a present of her novel, not yet published, entitled the Old Manor House, in three volumes. How happy wouldst thou find thyself in the enjoyment of both these articles at once!

If thou wilt not allow that a season of alarm is the season above all others, when petitioners for reasonable grants should be most importunate with government, thou wilt at least allow that it is the fittest time imaginable for government to give them satisfaction, because it is especially the season when its own interest may be best promoted and secured by doing it. It is always desirable to make friends of enemies, but never so desirable as when those possible friends continuing actual enemies have an opportunity to put their enmity in force with most advantage. This seems reasonable, and I hear accordingly that our governors have in reality a design to accede to all that the dissenters have already required, without waiting till they shall apply again. It will be wisely done. But I stand in doubt of the authenticity of my intelligence, merely because a government measure *so* wise and *so* just has been a great rarity at all times.

Mrs. Wright lately paid a morning visit at the Hall, and the Miss Knapps were with her. In their return they very kindly stopped at our door, to enquire after the health of me and Mrs. Unwin. I behaved, as usual, very ill on the occasion, and did not go out to speak to them; the reason, however, was that being just returned from my walk, and in my slippers, and the day being extremely raw and damp, and having, besides, an inflammation in my eyes, I was fearful of

taking cold; and shouldst thou see any of the ladies in question, as I suppose thou wilt ere long, thou canst not do better than plead my excuse by telling them so. If I do a rude thing I have at least the virtue to be ashamed of it; which is some apology, and more than every clown can say.

Thou canst not do better than send me the draft immediately, for at this season of the year the money-birds are full fledged, and fly at an immoderate rate; whole flocks of them disappear in a moment. Unless thou tell me who they are that eat me up alive, I can say nothing about it. In fact, I am eaten up by nothing but an enormous taxation, which has doubled the price of every thing within my memory; which makes it impossible for a man of small means like me, to live at all like a gentleman upon his income. Adieu, Mrs. U. sends her sincere love to you; she is as well as at any time since her last attack, and that is not much to boast of. When you went you took with you the key of the caddy. Bring it soon. I have a letter from Dublin about my Homer, which would do thy heart good. Adieu.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR BROTHER, Weston, Jan. 20, 1793.

Now I know that you are safe, I treat you, as you see, with a philosophical indifference, not acknowledging your kind and immediate answer to anxious inquiries, till it suits my own convenience. I have learned

however from my late solicitude, that not only you, but yours, interest me to a degree that, should any thing happen to either of you, would be very inconsistent with my peace. Sometimes I thought that you were extremely ill, and once or twice, that you were dead. As often some tragedy reached my ear concerning little Tom. "*O, vanæ mentes hominum!*" How liable are we to a thousand impositions, and how indebted to honest old Time, who never fails to undeceive us! Whatever you had in prospect you acted kindly by me not to make me partaker of your expectations, for I have a spirit, if not so sanguine as yours, yet that would have waited for your coming with anxious impatience, and have been dismally mortified by the disappointment. Had you come, and come without notice too, you would not have surprised us more, than (as the matter was managed) we were surprised at the arrival of your picture. It reached us in the evening, after the shutters were closed, at a time when a chaise might actually have brought you without giving us the least previous intimation. Then it was, that Samuel, with his cheerful countenance, appeared at the study door, and with a voice as cheerful as his looks, exclaimed, "Mr. Hayley is come, Madam!" We both started, and in the same moment cried, "Mr. Hayley come! and where is he?" The next moment corrected our mistake, and finding Mary's voice grow suddenly tremulous, I turned and saw her weeping.

I do nothing, notwithstanding all your exhortations: my idleness is a proof against them all, or to speak more truly my difficulties are so. Something indeed I

do. I play at pushpin with Homer every morning before breakfast, fingering and polishing, as Paris did his armour. I have lately had a letter from Dublin on that subject, which has pleased me.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAREST HAYLEY, Weston, Jan. 29, 1793.

I TRULY sympathize with you under your weight of sorrow for the loss of our good Samaritan. But be not brokenhearted, my friend! Remember, the loss of those we love is the condition on which we live ourselves; and that he who chooses his friends wisely from among the excellent of the earth, has a sure ground to hope concerning them when they die, that a merciful God has made them far happier than they could be here, and that we shall join them soon again. This is solid comfort, could we but avail ourselves of it; but I confess the difficulty of doing so. Sorrow is like the deaf adder, "that hears not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely;" and I feel so much myself for the death of Austin, that my own chief consolation is, that I had never seen him. Live yourself, I beseech you, for I have seen so much of you, that I can by no means spare you, and I will live as long as it shall please God to permit. I know you set some value on me, therefore let that promise comfort you, and give us not reason to say, like David's servant, "We know that it would have pleased thee more if all we had died, than this one, for whom thou art inconsolable." You have still Romney, and Car-

wardine, and Guy, and me, my poor Mary, and I know not how many beside; as many, I suppose, as ever had an opportunity of spending a day with you. He who has the most friends must necessarily lose the most, and he whose friends are numerous as yours, may the better spare a part of them. It is a changing transient scene: yet a little while, and this poor dream of life will be over with all of us—The living, and they who live unhappy, they are indeed subjects of sorrow.

Adieu! my beloved friend,

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 5, 1793.

In this last revisal of my work (the Homer) I have made a number of small improvements, and am now more convinced than ever, having exercised a cooler judgement upon it than before I could, that the translation will make its way. There must be time for the conquest of vehement and long-rooted prejudice; but without much self-partiality, I believe that the conquest will be made; and am certain that I should be of the same opinion, were the work another man's. I shall soon have finished the Odyssey, and when I have, will send the corrected copy of both to Johnson.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Feb. 10, 1793.

My pens are all split and my inkglass is dry;
Neither wit, common sense, nor ideas have I.

In vain has it been that I have made several attempts to write, since I came from Sussex; unless more comfortable days arrive than I have the confidence to look for, there is an end of all writing with me. I have no spirits:—when the Rose came, I was obliged to prepare for his coming by a nightly dose of laudanum—twelve drops suffice; but without them, I am devoured by melancholy.

A-propos of the Rose! His wife in her political notions is the exact counterpart of yourself—loyal in the extreme. Therefore, if you find her thus inclined, when you become acquainted with her, you must not place her resemblance of yourself to the account of her admiration of you, for she is your likeness ready made. In fact, we are all of one mind, about government matters, and notwithstanding your opinion, the Rose is himself a Whig, and I am a Whig, and you, my dear, are a Tory, and all the Tories now-a-days call all the Whigs Republicans. How the deuce you came to be a Tory is best known to yourself; you have to answer for this novelty to the shades of your ancestors, who were always Whigs ever since we had any.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 17, 1793.

I HAVE read the critique of my work in the Analytical Review, and am happy to have fallen into the hands of a critic, rigorous enough indeed, but a scholar, and a man of sense, and who does not deliberately intend me mischief. I am better pleased indeed that he censures some things, than I should have been with unmixed commendation, for his censure will (to use the new diplomatic term) accredit his praises. In his particular remarks he is for the most part right, and I shall be the better for them; but in his general ones I think he asserts too largely, and more than he could prove. With respect to inversions in particular, I know that they do not abound. Once they did, and I had Milton's example for it, not disapproved by Addison. But on ————'s remonstrance against them, I expunged the most, and in my new edition shall have fewer still. I know that they give dignity, and am sorry to part with them; but, to parody an old proverb, he who lives in the year ninety-three, must do as in the year ninety-three is done by others. The same remark I have to make on his censure of inharmonious lines. I know them to be much fewer than he asserts, and not more in number than I accounted indispensably necessary to a due variation of cadence. I have, however, now in conformity with modern taste (overmuch delicate in my mind) given to a far greater number of them a flow as smooth as oil. A few I retain, and will, in compliment to my own judgement.

He thinks me too faithful to compound epithets in the introductory lines, and I know his reason. He fears lest the English reader should blame Homer, whom he idolizes, though hardly more than I, for such constant repetition. But them I shall not alter. They are necessary to a just representation of the original. In the affair of Outis, I shall throw him flat on his back by an unanswerable argument, which I shall give in a note, and with which I am furnished by Mrs. Unwin. So much for hypercriticism, which has run away with all my paper. This critic by the way is ———, I know him by infallible indications.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Feb. 23, 1793.

My eyes, which have long been inflamed, will hardly serve me for Homer, and oblige me to make all my letters short. You have obliged me much, by sending me so speedily the remainder of your notes. I have begun with them again, and find them, as before, very much to the purpose. More to the purpose they could not have been, had you been Poetry Professor already. I rejoice sincerely in the prospect you have of that office, which, whatever may be your own thoughts of the matter, I am sure you will fill with great sufficiency. Would that my interest and power to serve you were greater! One string to my bow I have, and one only, which shall not be idle for want of my exertions. I thank you likewise for your very

entertaining notices and remarks in the natural way. The hurry in which I write would not suffer me to send you many in return, had I many to send, but only two or three present themselves.

Frogs will feed on worms. I saw a frog gathering into his gullet an earth-worm as long as himself; it cost him time and labour, but at last he succeeded.

Mrs. Unwin and I, crossing a brook, saw from the foot-bridge somewhat at the bottom of the water which had the appearance of a flower. Observing it attentively, we found that it consisted of a circular assemblage of minnows; their heads all met in a centre; and their tails diverging at equal distances, and being elevated above their heads, gave them the appearance of a flower half blown. One was longer than the rest; and as often as a straggler came in sight, he quitted his place to pursue him, and having driven him away, he returned to it again, no other minnow offering to take it in his absence. This we saw him do several times. The object that had attached them all was a dead minnow, which they seemed to be devouring.

After a very rainy day, I saw on one of the flower borders what seemed a long hair, but it had a waving, twining motion. Considering more nearly, I found it alive, and endued with spontaneity, but could not discover at the ends of it either head or tail, or any distinction of parts. I carried it into the house, when the air of a warm room dried and killed it presently.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 24, 1793.

YOUR letter (so full of kindness, and so exactly in unison with my own feelings for you) should have had, as it deserved to have, an earlier answer, had I not been perpetually tormented with inflamed eyes, which are a sad hinderance to me in every thing. But to make amends, if I do not send you an early answer, I send you at least a speedy one, being obliged to write as fast as my pen can trot, that I may shorten the time of poring upon paper as much as possible. Homer too has been another hinderance, for always when I can see, which is only about two hours every morning, and not at all by candlelight, I devote myself to him, being in haste to send him a second time to the press, that nothing may stand in the way of Milton. By the way, where are my dear Tom's remarks, which I long to have, and must have soon, or they will come too late?

Oh! you rogue! what would you give to have such a dream about Milton, as I had about a week since? I dreamed that being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking towards the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely, but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father, such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years; my second, a tran-

sport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with a complacence, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his Paradise Lost, as every man must, who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a schoolboy. He answered me by a smile and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "Well, you for your part will do well also;" at last recollecting his great age, (for I understood him to be two hundred years old,) I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking, I took my leave, and he took his, with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus, may it not?

How truly I rejoice that you have recovered Guy; that man won my heart the moment I saw him; give my love to him, and tell him I am truly glad he is alive again.

There is much sweetness in those lines from the sonnetteer of Avon, and not a little in dear Tom's,—an earnest, I trust, of good things to come.

With Mary's kind love, I must now conclude myself,

My dear brother, ever yours,

LIPPUS.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, March 4, 1793.

SINCE I received your last I have been much indisposed, very blind, and very busy. But I have not suffered all these evils at one and the same time. While the winter lasted I was miserable with a fever on my spirits; when the spring began to approach I was seized with an inflammation in my eyes; and ever since I have been able to use them, have been employed in giving more last touches to Homer, who is on the point of going to the press again.

Though you are Tory I believe, and I am Whig, our sentiments concerning the madcaps of France are much the same. They are a terrible race, and I have a horror both of them and their principles. Tacitus is certainly living now, and the quotations you sent me can be nothing but extracts from some letter of his to yourself.

Yours sincerely,

W. C.

TO MR. THOMAS HAYLEY.

MY DEAR LITTLE CRITIC, Weston, March 14, 1793.

I THANK you heartily for your observations, on which I set a higher value, because they have instructed me as much, and have entertained me more than all the other strictures of our public judges in these matters. Perhaps I am not much more pleased with *shameless wolf*, &c. than you. But what is to be done, my little man? Coarse as the expressions are, they are no

more than equivalent to those of Homer. The invective of the ancients was never tempered with good manners, as your papa can tell you; and my business, you know, is, not to be more polite than my author, but to represent him as closely as I can.

Dishonour'd foul I have wiped away, for the reason you give, which is a very just one, and the present reading is this,

> Who had dared dishonour thus
> The life itself, &c.

Your objection to *kindler of the fires of Heaven* I had the good fortune to anticipate, and expunged the dirty ambiguity some time since, wondering not a little that I had ever admitted it.

The fault you find with the two first verses of Nestor's speech discovers such a degree of just discernment, that but for your papa's assurance to the contrary, I must have suspected *him* as the author of that remark: much as I should have respected it, if it had been so, I value it I assure you, my little friend, still more as yours. In the new edition the passage will be found thus altered,

> Alas! great sorrow falls on Greece to-day,
> Priam, and Priam's sons, with all in Troy——
> Oh! how will they exult, and in their hearts
> Triumph, once hearing of this broil between
> The prime of Greece, in council, and in arms.

Where the word *reel* suggests to you the idea of a drunken mountain, it performs the service to which I destined it. It is a bold metaphor; but justified by one of the sublimest passages in scripture, compared

with the sublimity of which even that of Homer suffers humiliation.

It is God himself, who speaking, I think, by the prophet Isaiah, says,

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard."

With equal boldness in the same scripture, the poetry of which was never equalled, mountains are said to skip, to break out into singing, and the fields to clap their hands. I intend, therefore, that my Olympus shall be still tipsy.

The accuracy of your last remark, in which you convicted me of a bull, delights me. A fig for all critics but you! The blockheads could not find it. It shall stand thus,

First spake Polydamas———

Homer was more upon his guard, than to commit such a blunder, for he says,

ἦρχ' ἀγορεύειν.

And now, my dear little censor, once more accept my thanks. I only regret that your strictures are so few, being just and sensible as they are.

Tell your papa that he shall hear from me soon; accept mine, and my dear invalid's affectionate remembrances.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, Weston, March 19, 1793.

I AM so busy every morning before breakfast, (my only opportunity,) strutting and stalking in Homeric stilts, that you ought to account it an instance of marvellous grace and favour, that I condescend to write even to you. Sometimes I am seriously almost crazed with the multiplicity of the matters before me, and the little or no time that I have for them; and sometimes I repose myself after the fatigue of that distraction on the pillow of despair; a pillow which has often served me in time of need, and is become, by frequent use, if not very comfortable, at least convenient. So reposed, I laugh at the world, and say, "Yes, you may gape and expect both Homer and Milton from me, but I'll be hanged if ever you get them."

In Homer you must know I am advanced as far as the fifteenth book of the Iliad, leaving nothing behind me that can reasonably offend the most fastidious; and I design him for public appearance in his new dress as soon as possible, for a reason which any poet may guess, if he will but thrust his hand into his pocket.

You forbid me to tantalize you with an invitation to Weston, and yet invite me to Eartham!—No! no! there is no such happiness in store for me at present. Had I rambled at all, I was under promise to all my dear mother's kindred to go to Norfolk, and they are dying to see me; but I have told them, that die they must, for I cannot go; and ergo as you will perceive can go no where else.

Thanks for Mazarine's epitaph! it is full of witty paradox, and is written with a force and severity which sufficiently bespeak the author. I account it an inestimable curiosity, and shall be happy when time shall serve, with your aid, to make a good translation of it. But that will be a stubborn business. Adieu! The clock strikes eight; and now for Homer.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, March 27, 1793.

I MUST send you a line of congratulation on the event of your transaction with Johnson, since you I know partake with me in the pleasure I receive from it. Few of my concerns have been so happily concluded. I am now satisfied with my bookseller, as I have substantial cause to be, and account myself in good hands; a circumstance as pleasant to me as any other part of my business; for I love dearly to be able to confide with all my heart in those with whom I am connected, of what kind soever the connexion may be.

The question of printing or not printing the alterations, seems difficult to decide. If they are not printed, I shall perhaps disoblige some purchasers of the first edition; and if they are, many others of them, perhaps a great majority, will never care about them. As far as I have gone I have made a fair copy, and when I have finished the whole, will send them to Johnson, together with the interleaved volumes. He will see in a few minutes what it will be best to do, and by his judgement I shall be determined. The

opinion to which I most incline is, that they ought to be printed separately, for they are many of them rather long, here and there a whole speech, or a whole simile, and the verbal and lineal variations are so numerous, that altogether, I apprehend, they will give a new air to the work, and I hope a much improved one.

I forgot to say in the proper place that some notes, although but very few, I have added already, and may perhaps see here and there opportunity for a few more. But notes being little wanted, especially by people at all conversant with classical literature, as most readers of Homer are, I am persuaded that, were they numerous, they would be deemed an incumbrance. I shall write to Johnson soon, perhaps to-morrow, and then shall say the same thing to him.

In point of health we continue much the same. Our united love, and many thanks for your prosperous negotiations, attend yourself and whole family, and especially my little namesake.

Adieu,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, The Lodge, April 11, 1793.

THE long muster-roll of my great and small ancestors I signed, and dated, and sent up to Mr. Blue-mantle, on Monday, according to your desire. Such a pompous affair, drawn out for my sake, reminds me of the old fable of the mountain in parturition, and a mouse the produce. Rest undisturbed, say I, their lordly,

ducal, and royal dust! Had they left me something handsome, I should have respected them more. But perhaps they did not know that such a one as I should have the honour to be numbered among their descendants! Well! I have a little bookseller that makes me some amends for their deficiency. He has made me a present;—an act of liberality which I take every opportunity to blazon, as it well deserves. But you, I suppose, have learned it already from Mr. Rose.

Fear not, my man. You will acquit yourself very well, I dare say, both in standing for your degree, and when you have gained it. A little tremor, and a little shamefacedness in a stripling, like you, are recommendations rather than otherwise; and so they ought to be, being symptoms of an ingenuous mind rather unfrequent in this age of brass.

What you say of your determined purpose, with God's help, to take up the Cross, and despise the shame, gives us both real pleasure. In our pedigree is found one at least who did it before you. Do you the like, and you will meet him in heaven, as sure as the Scripture is the word of God.

The quarrel that the world has with evangelic men and doctrines, they would have with a host of angels in the human form: for it is the quarrel of owls with sunshine; of ignorance with divine illumination.

Adieu, my dear Johnny! We shall expect you with earnest desire of your coming, and receive you with much delight.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER, Weston, April 23, 1793.

BETTER late than never, and better a little than none at all! Had I been at liberty to consult my inclinations, I would have answered your truly kind and affectionate letter immediately. But I am the busiest man alive: and when this epistle is dispatched, you will be the only one of my correspondents to whom I shall not be indebted. While I write this, my poor Mary sits mute, which I cannot well bear, and which, together with want of time to write much, will have a curtailing effect on my epistle.

My only studying time is still given to Homer, not to correction and amendment of him, (for that is all over,) but to writing notes. Johnson has expressed a wish for some, that the unlearned may be a little illuminated concerning classical story and the mythology of the ancients; and his behaviour to me has been so liberal, that I can refuse him nothing. Poking into the old Greek commentators blinds me. But it is no matter;—I am the more like Homer.

Ever yours, my dearest Hayley,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 25, 1793.

HAD it not been stipulated between us that, being both at present pretty much engrossed by business, we should write when opportunity offers, I should be frighted at the date of your last: but you will not

judge me, I know, by the unfrequency of my letters, nor suppose that my thoughts about you are equally unfrequent. In truth, they are not. No day passes in which you are excluded from them. I am so busy that I do not expect even now to fill my paper. While I write, my poor invalid, who is still unable to amuse herself either with book or needle, sits silent at my side; which makes me, in all my letters, hasten to a conclusion. My only time for study is now before breakfast; and I lengthen it as much as I can by rising early.

I know not that, with respect to our health, we are either better or worse than when you saw us. Mrs. Unwin, perhaps, has gained a little strength; and the advancing spring, I hope, will add to it. As to myself, I am, in body, soul, and spirit, *semper idem*. Prayer, I know, is made for me; and sometimes with great enlargement of heart, by those who offer it: and in this circumstance consists the only evidence I can find, that God is still favourably mindful of me, and has not cast me off for ever.

A long time since, I received a parcel from Dr. Cogshall, of New York; and, looking on the reverse of the packing-paper, saw there an address to you. I conclude, therefore, that you received it first, and at his desire transmitted it to me; consequently you are acquainted with him, and probably apprised of the nature of our correspondence. About three years ago I had his first letter to me, which came accompanied by half a dozen American publications. He proposed an exchange of books on religious subjects, as likely to be useful on both sides of the water. Most of those he

sent, however, I had seen before. I sent him, in return, such as I could get; but felt myself indifferently qualified for such a negotiation. I am now called upon to contribute my quota again; and shall be obliged to you if, in your next, you will mention the titles of half a dozen that may be procured at little cost, that are likely to be new in that country, and useful.

About two months since, I had a letter from Mr. Jeremiah Waring, of Alton in Hampshire. Do you know such a man? I think I have seen his name in advertisements of mathematical works. He is, however, or seems to be, a very pious man, though I suspect him, whatever he may be in mathematical matters, in religious but a novice. He writes indeed as if he was of the perfectionist tribe, and speaks of very great apprehensions that he has lest the cause of the Gospel should suffer by Mr. Van Lier's letters. He finds great fault with them on the score of that confidence with which the writer speaks of his election to eternal life, and is as little pleased with the conflicts he confesses that he still has with the powers of darkness; not conceiving it possible that if he were indeed a Christian, he could have any conflicts at all. I answered him as well as I could, and have heard no more of him; but wished that you had to satisfy him rather than I.

I was a little surprised lately, seeing in the last Gentleman's Magazine a letter from somebody at Winchester, in which is a copy of the epitaph of our poor friend Unwin;—an English, not a Latin one. It has been pleasant to me sometimes to think, that his dust lay under an inscription of my writing; which I had

no reeason to doubt, because the Latin one, which I composed at the request of the executors, was as I understood from Mr. H. Thornton, accepted by them, and approved. If they thought, after all, that an English one, as more intelligible, would therefore be preferable, I believe they judged wisely; but having never heard that they had changed their mind about it, I was at a loss to account for the alteration.

So now, my dear friend, adieu!—When I have thanked you for a barrel of oysters, and added our united kind remembrances to yourself and Miss Catlett, I shall have exhausted the last moment that I can spare at present.

I remain sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, May 4, 1793.

WHILE your sorrow for our common loss was fresh in your mind, I would not write, lest a letter on so distressing a subject should be too painful both to you and me; and now that I seem to have reached a proper time for doing it, the multiplicity of my literary business will hardly afford me leisure. Both you and I have this comfort when deprived of those we love,—at our time of life we have every reason to believe that the deprivation cannot be long. Our sun is setting too; and when the hour of rest arrives we shall rejoin your brother, and many whom we have tenderly loved, our forerunners into a better country.

I will say no more on a theme which it will be better

perhaps to treat with brevity; and because the introduction of any other might seem a transition too violent, I will only add that Mrs. Unwin and I are about as well as we at any time have been within the last year.

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 5, 1793.

My delay to answer your last kind letter, to which likewise you desired a speedy reply, must have seemed rather difficult to explain on any other supposition than that of illness; but illness has not been the cause, although, to say the truth, I cannot boast of having been lately very well. Yet has not this been the cause of my silence, but your own advice, very proper and earnestly given to me, to proceed in the revisal of Homer. To this it is owing that instead of giving an hour or two before breakfast to my correspondence, I allot that time entirely to my studies. I have nearly given the last touches to the poetry, and am now busied far more laboriously in writing notes at the request of my honest bookseller, transmitted to me in the first instance by you, and afterwards repeated by himself. I am therefore deep in the old Scholia, and have advanced to the latter part of Iliad nine, explaining, as I go, such passages as may be difficult to unlearned readers, and such only; for notes of that kind are the notes that Johnson desired. I find it a more laborious task than the translation was, and shall be heartily glad when it is over. In the mean time all

the letters I receive remain unanswered, or if they receive an answer, it is always a short one. Such this must be. Johnny is here, having flown over London.

Homer I believe will make a much more respectable appearance than before. Johnson now thinks it will be right to make a separate impression of the amendments.

W. C.

I breakfast every morning on seven or eight pages of the Greek commentators. For so much I am obliged to read in order to select perhaps three or four short notes for the readers of my translation.

Homer is indeed a tie upon me that must not on any account be broken, till all his demands are satisfied; though I have fancied while the revisal of the Odyssey was at a distance, that it would ask less labour in the finishing, it is not unlikely that, when I take it actually in hand, I may find myself mistaken. Of this at least I am sure, that uneven verse abounds much more in it than it once did in the Iliad, yet to the latter the critics objected on that account, though to the former never; perhaps because they had not read it. Hereafter they shall not quarrel with me on that score. The Iliad is now all smooth turnpike, and I will take equal care that there shall be no jolts in the Odyssey.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, The Lodge, May 7, 1793.

YOU have thought me long silent, and so have many others. In fact I have not for many months written punctually to any but yourself and Hayley. My time, the little I have, is so engrossed by Homer, that I have at this moment a bundle of unanswered letters by me, and letters likely to be so. Thou knowest, I dare say, what it is to have a head weary with thinking. Mine is so fatigued by breakfast time, three days out of four, I am utterly incapable of sitting down to my desk again for any purpose whatever.

I am glad I have convinced thee at last that thou art a Tory. Your friend's definition of Whig and Tory may be just for aught I know, as far as the latter are concerned; but respecting the former, I think him mistaken. There is no TRUE Whig who wishes all power in the hands of his own party. The division of it, which the lawyers call tripartite, is exactly what he desires; and he would have neither Kings, Lords, nor Commons unequally trusted, or in the smallest degree predominant. Such a Whig am I, and such Whigs are the true friends of the constitution.

Adieu! my dear, I am dead with weariness.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR BROTHER, Weston, May 21, 1793.

You must either think me extremely idle, or extremely busy, that I have made your last very kind letter wait so very long for an answer. The truth however is, that I am neither; but have had time enough to have scribbled to you, had I been able to scribble at all. To explain this riddle I must give you a short account of my proceedings.

I rise at six every morning, and fag till near eleven, when I breakfast. The consequence is, that I am so exhausted as not to be able to write, when the opportunity offers. You will say—"Breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you." I answer—"Perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I cannot spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study." This uneasiness of which I complain is a proof that I am somewhat stricken in years; and there is no other cause by which I can account for it, since I go early to bed, always between ten and eleven, and seldom fail to sleep well. Certain it is, ten years ago I could have done as much, and sixteen years ago did actually much more, without suffering fatigue, or any inconvenience from my labours. How insensibly old age steals on, and how often it is actually arrived before we suspect it! Accident alone, —some occurrence that suggests a comparison of our former with our present selves, affords the discovery. Well! it is always good to be undeceived, especially on an article of such importance.

There has been a book lately published, entitled, *Man as he is.* I have heard a high character of it, as admirably written, and am informed that for that reason, and because it inculcates Whig principles, it is by many imputed to you. I contradicted this report, assuring my informant that had it been yours, I must have known it, for that you have bound yourself to make me your father-confessor on all such wicked occasions, and not to conceal from me even a murder, should you happen to commit one.

I will not trouble you, at present, to send me any more books with a view to my notes on Homer. I am not without hopes that Sir John Throckmorton, who is expected here from Venice in a short time, may bring me Villoison's edition of the Odyssey. He certainly will, if he found it published, and that alone will be *instar omnium.*

Adieu, my dearest brother! Give my love to Tom, and thank him for his book, of which I believe I need not have deprived him, intending that my readers shall detect the occult instruction contained in Homer's stories for themselves.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, Weston, June 1, 1793.

YOU will not (you say) come to us now; and you tell us not when you will. These assignations *sine die* are such shadowy things, that I can neither grasp nor get any comfort from them. Know you not, that hope is the next best thing to enjoyment? Give us then a

hope, and a determinate time for that hope to fix on, and we will endeavour to be satisfied.

Johnny is gone to Cambridge, called thither to take his degree, and is much missed by me. He is such an active little fellow in my service, that he cannot be otherwise. In three weeks, however, I shall hope to have him again for a fortnight. I have had a letter from him, containing an incident which has given birth to the following.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET, WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE.

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the Church endow'd
With heavenly gifts, to Heathens not allow'd:
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet, when other locks were dry.
Heaven grant us half the omen! May we see,
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

These are spick and span. Johnny himself has not yet seen them. By the way, he has filled your book completely; and I will give thee a guinea if thou wilt search thy old book for a couple of songs, and two or three other pieces of which I know thou madest copies at the vicarage, and which I have lost. The songs I know are pretty good, and I would fain recover them.

W. C.

TO MR. R. PHILLIPS[1], PRINTER AT LEICESTER.

SIR, Weston Underwood, June 14, 1793.

I SEE two country papers, but the Leicester Herald is not one of them. In neither of them, I believe, has your case been mentioned, or in the London paper which comes to me. I am therefore totally ignorant of all the circumstances of your case. Nor can I understand, had I all the intelligence on the subject that you could give me, how it would be possible for me to write any thing that would satisfy the demands of your resentment, just perhaps, and the warmer for being so, and which would not expose me to the evils by which you are so great a sufferer. A tame composition, in short, would not serve you, and a spirited and vehement one might bring me into your predicament.

* * * * * * *

It is possible too that we may differ not a little in our political sentiments. I see many evils in the administration of public affairs, which I heartily wish redressed, but by no means approve the spirit in which that redress has been sought. And if Government, insulted and threatened as it has been, and perhaps in some degree endangered, has lately exerted itself to

[1] It is somewhat remarkable that this and the following letter should have been transmitted to me, within four days, by two gentlemen equally strangers to me, and (I believe) to each other. For the first I am obliged to Mr. Thornly of Cheapside, for the second to Mr. Wild of Clapham Lodge.

impose some restraint on seditious publications, I am not the man who shall quarrel with it on that account.

* * * * * * *

After what I have said, it is hardly worth while to mention any other impediments. But I have at present two unwieldy works before me,—a new edition of my translation of Homer, with notes, and a new edition of the poetical works of Milton;—subjects of study which turn my mind altogether away from politics, and leave me indeed no leisure for them.

* * * * * * *

Not insensible of the honour done me by your choice of me as the person whom you would wish for your poetical advocate, and in which capacity, supposing your complaint a just one, I should very willingly serve you but for the reasons mentioned,

I remain, sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

WM. COWPER.

TO R. PHILLIPS, PRINTER AT LEICESTER.

SIR, Weston Underwood, June 23, 1793.

AFTER an attentive perusal of your printed case, and of the two letters with which you favoured me, I felt myself disposed to render you such service as I could in my way, but thought it prudent first to consult a friend of mine in London, an able lawyer, and in party matters a man of great moderation. I sent him accordingly the papers containing your representation, and

asked him if I might safely comply with your request. His answer is in the negative. He says, as in my letter to you I had said myself, That it is not possible I should assist you by such means, and that the attempt would certainly be inexpedient,—perhaps even dangerous. You will excuse me therefore if I abstain from all interference, and believe me, with concern for your sufferings,

Your obedient humble servant,

WM. COWPER.

P. S. I thank you for your paper, just now received; but since it is impossible that I should merit the favour at your hands, beg you to send no more.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, June 30, 1793.

YOUR seasonable supply of thirty-five pounds ten shillings is just arrived, and I sit down to my desk to thank you for it, making you a sort of unparliamentary acknowledgement; but you will not inform against me. You ought not to be surprised that I want money at the half year's end; for where is the man who does not? But whatever you think, never suspect that my wants are occasioned by lavish and undistinguishing bounty. Nobody is less obnoxious to that imputation than I; you I am sure are not who give to me. I know who is alluded to in your letter under the description of a person who lives luxuriously at my cost. But

you are misinformed, unless a pint of ale at meal times be a luxury, there are no luxuries in that man's house, I assure you; and I can assure you besides, that whatever he has, he has it not by gift of mine: Mrs. Unwin and I are merely the medium through which the bounty passes, not the authors of it. But we administer it conscientiously, and as in the sight of God, and are the more scrupulous about it because it is not ours. As to the rest, we help an old woman or two whom the parish would starve if we did not; and there is the sum total of all the eleemosynary profusion with which we are chargeable.

* * * *

Our two neighbours, Praed and Wright, have been some time employed in changing the face of the country around them. After their laudable example, I too am working wonders here, but on a smaller scale. I have already built one summer-house with the materials of the old study, and am building another opposite to it. Added to which, I have to set the bust of Homer, given me by Johnny, on a pedestal worthy of it. Danger of ruin therefore seems to threaten me from this rage of improvement more than from any indiscreet acts of charity. But take courage, my cousin, the danger will be intercepted; and with my grand climacteric at hand, I may reasonably hope to be lodged in a house that will serve me in all seasons, before the arrival of any such catastrophe.

Thou meetest with odd sort of folks in thy travels. What can Hookham possibly mean by saying that an octavo edition will hinder the sale of the quarto, which

he observes is out of print? If it is out of print, it is no longer upon sale; and if it be no longer upon sale, the sale of it cannot be hindered. This is logic,—as good logic at least as can be looked for from a poet, and such as would puzzle him, bookseller as he is, to answer. No, my dear, the bulk of readers are those who purchase octavos: the rich only can afford quartos, and they read nothing. My proper business therefore is to consult the inclinations of the former, who have long clamoured for an edition that they can afford to purchase.

Hayley asks in his last letter—"How does your charming cousin, Lady Hesketh? The pleasure of conversing with her is one of the few things I regret in not visiting the great city this spring."

It is in vain that thou counsellest me to leave Weston for Norfolk. Kinder friends than I have here in the Courtenays I could not find even there; and this is, moreover, of all the earth, the spot that delights me most.

With Mrs. U's best remembrances, I remain,

Ever thine,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAREST HAYLEY, Weston, July 7, 1793.

If the excessive heat of this day, which forbids me to do any thing else, will permit me to scribble to you, I shall rejoice. To do this is a pleasure to me at all times, but to do it now a double one; because I am

you are misinformed, unless a pint of ale at meal times be a luxury, there are no luxuries in that man's house, I assure you; and I can assure you besides, that whatever he has, he has it not by gift of mine: Mrs. Unwin and I are merely the medium through which the bounty passes, not the authors of it. But we administer it conscientiously, and as in the sight of God, and are the more scrupulous about it because it is not ours. As to the rest, we help an old woman or two whom the parish would starve if we did not; and there is the sum total of all the eleemosynary profusion with which we are chargeable.

* * * *

Our two neighbours, Praed and Wright, have been some time employed in changing the face of the country around them. After their laudable example, I too am working wonders here, but on a smaller scale. I have already built one summer-house with the materials of the old study, and am building another opposite to it. Added to which, I have to set the bust of Homer, given me by Johnny, on a pedestal worthy of it. Danger of ruin therefore seems to threaten me from this rage of improvement more than from any indiscreet acts of charity. But take courage, my cousin, the danger will be intercepted; and with my grand climacteric at hand, I may reasonably hope to be lodged in a house that will serve me in all seasons, before the arrival of any such catastrophe.

Thou meetest with odd sort of folks in thy travels. What can Hookham possibly mean by saying that an octavo edition will hinder the sale of the quarto, which

he observes is out of print? If it is out of print, it is no longer upon sale; and if it be no longer upon sale, the sale of it cannot be hindered. This is logic,—as good logic at least as can be looked for from a poet, and such as would puzzle him, bookseller as he is, to answer. No, my dear, the bulk of readers are those who purchase octavos: the rich only can afford quartos, and they read nothing. My proper business therefore is to consult the inclinations of the former, who have long clamoured for an edition that they can afford to purchase.

Hayley asks in his last letter—"How does your charming cousin, Lady Hesketh? The pleasure of conversing with her is one of the few things I regret in not visiting the great city this spring."

It is in vain that thou counsellest me to leave Weston for Norfolk. Kinder friends than I have here in the Courtenays I could not find even there; and this is, moreover, of all the earth, the spot that delights me most.

With Mrs. U's best remembrances, I remain,

Ever thine,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAREST HAYLEY, Weston, July 7, 1793.

If the excessive heat of this day, which forbids me to do any thing else, will permit me to scribble to you, I shall rejoice. To do this is a pleasure to me at all times, but to do it now a double one; because I am

in haste to tell you how much I am delighted with your projected quadruple alliance, and to assure you that if it please God to afford me health, spirits, ability, and leisure, I will not fail to devote them all to the production of my quota of *The Four Ages*.

You are very kind to humour me as you do, and had need be a little touched yourself with all my oddities, that you may know how to administer to mine. All whom I love do so, and I believe it to be impossible to love heartily those who do not. People must not do me good in *their* way, but in my *own*, and then they do me good indeed. My pride, my ambition, and my friendship for you, and the interest I take in my own dear self, will all be consulted and gratified by an arm-in-arm appearance with you in public; and I shall work with more zeal and assiduity at Homer, and, when Homer is finished, at Milton, with the prospect of such a coalition before me. But what shall I do with a multitude of small pieces, from which I intended to select the best, and adding them to *The Four Ages*, to have made a volume? Will there be room for them upon your plan? I have retouched them, and will retouch them again. Some of them will suggest pretty devices to a designer, and in short I have a desire not to lose them.

I am at this moment, with all the imprudence natural to poets, expending nobody knows what in embellishing my premises, or rather the premises of my neighbour Courtenay, which is more poetical still. I have built one summer-house already, with the boards of my old study, and am building another spick and

span, as they say. I have also a stone-cutter now at work, setting a bust of my dear old Grecian on a pedestal; and besides all this, I meditate still more that it is to be done in the autumn. Your project therefore is most opportune, as any project must needs be that has so direct a tendency to put money into the pocket of one so likely to want it.

> Ah brother poet! send me of your shade,
> And bid the Zephyrs hasten to my aid!
> Or, like a worm unearth'd at noon, I go
> Dispatch'd by sunshine, to the shades below.

My poor Mary is as well as the heat will allow her to be, and whether it be cold or sultry, is always affectionately mindful of you and yours.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. GREATHEED.

July 23, 1793.

I WAS not without some expectation of a line from you, my dear sir, though you did not promise me one at your departure; and am happy not to have been disappointed; still happier to learn that you and Mrs. Greatheed are well, and so delightfully situated. Your kind offer to us of sharing with you the house which you at present inhabit, added to the short but lively description of the scenery that surrounds it, wants nothing to win our acceptance, should it please God to give Mrs. Unwin a little more strength, and should I ever be master of my time so as to be able to

gratify myself with what would please me most. But many have claims upon us, and some who cannot absolutely be said to have any, would yet complain, and think themselves slighted, should we prefer rocks and caves to them. In short, we are called so many ways, that these numerous demands are likely to operate as a *remora*, and to keep us fixed at home. Here we can occasionally have the pleasure of yours and Mrs. Greatheed's company, and to have it here must I believe content us. Hayley in his last letter gives me reason to expect the pleasure of seeing him and his dear boy Tom in the autumn. He will use all his eloquence to draw us to Eartham again. My cousin Johnny of Norfolk holds me under a promise to make my first trip thither, and the very same promise I have hastily made to visit Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, at Bucklands. How to reconcile such clashing promises, and give satisfaction to all, would puzzle me, had I nothing else to do; and therefore, as I say, the result will probably be, that we shall find ourselves obliged to go no where, since we cannot every where.

* * * * * * *

Wishing you both safe at home again, and to see you, as soon as may be, here,

I remain, affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 24, 1793.

I HAVE been vexed with myself, my dearest brother, and with every thing about me, not excepting even Homer himself, that I have been obliged so long to delay an answer to your last kind letter. If I listen any longer to calls another way, I shall hardly be able to tell you how happy we are in the hope of seeing you in the autumn, before the autumn will have arrived. Thrice welcome will you and your dear boy be to us, and the longer you will afford us your company, the more welcome. I have set up the head of Homer on a famous fine pedestal, and a very majestic appearance he makes. I am now puzzled about a motto, and wish you to decide for me between two, one of which I have composed myself, a Greek one as follows:

Εἰκονα τις ταύτην; κλυτὸν ἀνέρος ἀνομ' ὄλωλεν.
Οὔνομα δ' ἔτος ἀνὴρ ἄφθιτον αἴεν ἔχει.

The other is my own translation of a passage in the Odyssey, the original of which I have seen used as a motto to an engraved head of Homer many a time.

The present edition of the lines stands thus:

Him partially the muse,
And dearly loved, yet gave him good and ill:
She quench'd his sight, but gave him strains divine.

Tell me by the way, (if you ever had any speculations on the subject,) what is it you suppose Homer to have meant in particular, when he ascribed his blindness to the Muse; for that he speaks of himself under

the name Demodocus in the eighth book, I believe is by all admitted. How could the old bard study himself blind, when books were either few, or none at all? And did he write his poems? If neither were the cause, as seems reasonable to imagine, how could he incur his blindness by such means as could be justly imputable to the muse? Would mere thinking blind him? I want to know;

"Call up some spirit from the vasty deep!"

I said to my Sam[1]—"Sam, build me a shed in the garden, with any thing that you can find, and make it rude and rough like one of those at Eartham."—"Yes, sir," says Sam, and straightway laying his own noddle, and the carpenter's noddle together, has built me a thing fit for Stow Gardens. Is not this vexatious?—I threaten to inscribe it thus;

Beware of building! I intended
Rough logs and thatch, and thus it ended.

But my Mary says I shall break Sam's heart, and the carpenter's too, and will not consent to it. Poor Mary sleeps but ill. How have you lived who cannot bear a sunbeam?

Adieu! my dearest Hayley.

W. C.

[1] A very affectionate, worthy domestic, who attended his master into Sussex.—HAYLEY.

TO MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

MY DEAR MADAM, Weston, July 25, 1793.

MANY reasons concurred to make me impatient for the arrival of your most acceptable present, and among them was the fear lest you should perhaps suspect me of tardiness in acknowledging so great a favour; a fear that, as often as it prevailed, distressed me exceedingly. At length I have received it, and my little bookseller assures me that he sent it the very day he got it; by some mistake however the waggon brought it instead of the coach, which occasioned a delay that I could ill afford.

It came this morning about an hour ago; consequently I have not had time to peruse the poem, though you may be sure I have found enough for the perusal of the Dedication. I have in fact given it three readings, and in each have found increasing pleasure.

I am a whimsical creature; when I write for the public I write of course with a desire to please, in other words to acquire fame, and I labour accordingly; but when I find that I have succeeded, feel myself alarmed, and ready to shrink from the acquisition.

This I have felt more than once, and when I saw my name at the head of your Dedication, I felt it again; but the consummate delicacy of your praise soon convinced me that I might spare my blushes, and that the demand was less upon my modesty than my gratitude. Of that be assured, dear Madam, and of

the truest esteem and respect of your most obliged and affectionate, humble servant,

W. C.

P. S. I should have been much grieved to have let slip this opportunity of thanking you for your charming sonnets, and my two most agreeable old friends, Monimia and Orlando.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, Weston, Aug. 11, 1793.

I AM glad that my poor and hasty attempts to express some little civility to Miss Fanshaw, and the amiable Count, have your and her approbation. The lines addressed to her were not what I would have made them; but lack of time, a lack which always presses me, would not suffer me to improve them. Many thanks for her letter, which, were my merits less the subject of it, I should without scruple say is an excellent one. She writes with the force and accuracy of a person skilled in more languages than are spoken in the present day, as I doubt not that she is. I perfectly approve the theme she recommends to me, but am at present so totally absorbed in Homer, that all I do beside is ill done, being hurried over; and I would not execute ill a subject of her recommending.

I shall watch the walnuts with more attention than those who eat them, which I do in some hope, though you do not expressly say so, that when their threshing

time arrives, we shall see you here. I am now going to paper my new study, and in a short time it will be fit to inhabit.

Lady Spencer has sent me a present from Rome, by the hands of Sir John Throckmorton, engravings of Odyssey subjects, after figures by Flaxman, a statuary at present resident there, of high repute, and much a friend of Hayley's.

Thou livest, my dear, I acknowledge, in a very fine country, but they have spoiled it by building London in it.

Adieu,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 15, 1793.

Instead of a pound or two, spending a mint,
Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint,
That building, and building, a man may be driven
At last out of doors, and have no house to live in.

Besides, my dearest brother, they have not only built for me what I did not want, but have ruined a notable tetrastic by doing so. I had written one which I designed for a hermitage, and it will by no means suit the fine and pompous affair which they have made instead of one. So that as a poet I am every way afflicted; made poorer than I need have been, and robbed of my verses; what case can be more deplorable?

You must not suppose me ignorant of what Flaxman has done, or that I have not seen it, or that I am not

actually in possession of it, at least of the engravings which you mention. In fact, I have had them more than a fortnight. Lady Dowager Spencer, to whom I inscribed my Odyssey, and who was at Rome when Sir John Throckmorton was there, charged him with them as a present to me, and arriving here lately he executed his commission. Romney I doubt not is right in his judgement of them; he is an artist himself, and cannot easily be mistaken; and I take his opinion as an oracle, the rather because it coincides exactly with my own. The figures are highly classical, antique, and elegant; especially that of Penelope, who whether she wakes or sleeps must necessarily charm all beholders.

Your scheme of embellishing my Odyssey with these plates is a kind one, and the fruit of your benevolence to me; but Johnson, I fear, will hardly stake so much money as the cost would amount to on a work, the fate of which is at present uncertain. Nor could we adorn the Odyssey in this splendid manner, unless we had similar ornaments to bestow on the Iliad. Such I presume are not ready, and much time must elapse, even if Flaxman should accede to the plan, before he could possibly prepare them. Happy indeed should I be to see a work of mine so nobly accompanied, but should that good fortune ever attend me, it cannot take place till the third or fourth edition shall afford the occasion. This I regret, and I regret too that you will have seen them before I can have an opportunity to show them to you. Here is sixpence for you if you will abstain from the sight of them while you are in London.

The sculptor?—Nameless, though once dear to fame;
But this man bears an everlasting name[1].

So I purpose it shall stand; and on the pedestal, when you come, in that form you will find it. The added line from the Odyssey is charming, but the assumption of sonship to Homer seems too daring; suppose it stood thus,

Ὡς δὲ παῖς ᾧ πατρὶ, καὶ ὅποτε λήσομαι αὐτῆ.

I am not sure that this would be clear of the same objection, and it departs from the text still more.

With my poor Mary's best love and our united wishes to see you here, I remain,

My dearest brother, ever yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Aug. 20, 1793.

My dearest Catharina is too reasonable, I know, to expect news from me, who live on the outside of the world, and know nothing that passes within it. The best news is, that though you are gone, you are not gone for ever, as once I supposed you were, and said that we should probably meet no more. Some news however we have; but then I conclude that you have already received it from the Doctor, and that thought almost deprives me of all courage to relate it. On the evening of the feast, Bob Archer's house affording I suppose the best room for the purpose, all the lads

[1] A translation of Cowper's Greek verses on his bust of Homer, p. 217.

and lasses, who felt themselves disposed to dance, assembled there. Long time they danced, at least long time they did something a little like it; when at last the company having retired, the fiddler asked Bob for a lodging. Bob replied—"that his beds were all full of his own family, but if he chose it he would show him a haycock, where he might sleep as sound as in any bed whatever."—So forth they went together, and when they reached the place, the fiddler knocked down Bob, and demanded his money. But happily for Bob, though he might be knocked down, and actually was so, yet he could not possibly be robbed, having nothing. The fiddler therefore having amused himself with kicking him and beating him as he lay, as long as he saw good, left him, and has never been heard of since, nor enquired after indeed, being no doubt the last man in the world whom Bob wishes to see again.

By a letter from Hayley to-day I learn that Flaxman, to whom we are indebted for those Odyssey figures which Lady Frog brought over, has almost finished a set for the Iliad also. I should be glad to embellish my Homer with them, but neither my bookseller nor I shall probably choose to risk so expensive an ornament on a work, whose reception with the public is at present doubtful.

Adieu, my dearest Catharina. Give my best love to your husband. Come home as soon as you can, and accept our united very best wishes.

W. C

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Aug. 22, 1793.

I REJOICE that you have had so pleasant an excursion, and have beheld so many beautiful scenes. Except the delightful Upway I have seen them all. I have lived much at Southampton, have slept and caught a sore throat at Lyndhurst, and have swam in the bay of Weymouth. It will give us great pleasure to see you here, should your business give you an opportunity to finish your excursions of this season with one to Weston.

As for my going on, it is much as usual. I rise at six; an industrious and wholesome practice, from which I have never swerved since March. I breakfast generally about eleven, having given the intermediate time to my old delightful bard. Villoisson no longer keeps me company. I therefore now jog along with Clarke and Barnes at my elbow, and from the excellent annotations of the former select such as I think likely to be useful, or that recommend themselves by the amusement they may afford, of which sorts there are not a few. Barnes also affords me some of both kinds, but not so many, his notes being chiefly paraphrastical or grammatical. My only fear is lest between them both I should make my work too voluminous.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Aug. 27, 1793.

I THANK you, my dear brother, for consulting the Gibbonian oracle on the question concerning Homer's Muse, and his blindness. I proposed it likewise to my little neighbour Buchanan, who gave me precisely the same answer. I felt an insatiable thirst to learn something new concerning him, and despairing of information from others, was willing to hope that I had stumbled on matter unnoticed by the commentators, and might perhaps acquire a little intelligence from himself. But the great and the little oracle together have extinguished that hope, and I despair now of making any curious discoveries about him.

Since Flaxman (which I did not know till your letter told me so,) has been at work for the Iliad, as well as the Odyssey, it seems a great pity, that the engravings should not be bound up with some Homer or other; and, as I said before, I should have been too proud to have bound them up in mine. But there is an objection, at least such it seems to me, that threatens to disqualify them for such a use, namely, the shape and size of them, which are such, that no book of the usual form could possibly receive them, save in a folded state, which I apprehend would be to murder them.

The monument of Lord Mansfield, for which you say he is engaged, will (I dare say) prove a noble effort of genius. Statuaries, as I have heard an emi-

nent one say, do not much trouble themselves about a likeness: else I would give much to be able to communicate to Flaxman the perfect idea that I have of the subject, such as he was forty years ago. He was at that time wonderfully handsome, and would expound the most mysterious intricacies of the law, or recapitulate both matter and evidence of a cause, as long as from hence to Eartham, with an intelligent smile on his features, that bespoke plainly the perfect ease with which he did it. The most abstruse studies (I believe) never cost him any labour.

You say nothing lately of your intended journey our way: yet the year is waning, and the shorter days give you a hint to lose no time unnecessarily. Lately we had the whole family at the Hall, and now we have nobody. The Throckmortons are gone into Berkshire, and the Courtenays into Yorkshire. They are so pleasant a family, that I heartily wish you to see them; and at the same time wish to see you before they return, which will not be sooner than October. How shall I reconcile these wishes seemingly opposite? Why, by wishing that you may come soon and stay long. I know no other way of doing it.

My poor Mary is much as usual. I have set up Homer's head, and inscribed the pedestal; my own Greek at the top, with your translation under it, and

Ὡς δὲ παῖς φ̓ πατρὶ, &c.

It makes altogether a very smart and learned appearance.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Aug. 29, 1793.

YOUR question, at what time your coming to us will be most agreeable, is a knotty one, and such as, had I the wisdom of Solomon, I should be puzzled to answer. I will therefore leave it still a question, and refer the time of your journey Westonward entirely to your own election: adding this one limitation however, that I do not wish to see you exactly at present, on account of the unfinished state of my study, the wainscot of which still smells of paint, and which is not yet papered. But to return: as I have insinuated, thy pleasant company is the thing which I always wish, and as much at one time as at another. I believe, if I examine myself minutely, since I despair of ever having it in the height of summer, which for your sake I should desire most, the depth of the winter is the season which would be most eligible to me. For then it is, that in general I have most need of a cordial, and particularly in the month of January. I am sorry however that I have departed so far from my first purpose, and am answering a question which I declared myself unable to answer. Choose thy own time, secure of this, that whatever time that be, it will always to us be a welcome one.

I thank you for your pleasant extract of Miss Fanshaw's letter.

> Her pen drops eloquence as sweet
> As any muse's tongue can speak;
> Nor need a scribe, like her, regret
> Her want of Latin or of Greek.

And now, my dear, adieu! I have done more than I expected, and begin to feel myself exhausted with so much scribbling at the end of four hours close application to study.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, Sept. 6, 1793.

To do a kind thing, and in a kind manner, is a double kindness, and no man is more addicted to both than you, or more skilful in contriving them. Your plan to surprise me agreeably succeeded to admiration. It was only the day before yesterday that, while we walked after dinner in the orchard, Mrs. Unwin between Sam and me, hearing the hall-clock, I observed a great difference between that and ours, and began immediately to lament, as I had often done, that there was not a sun-dial in all Weston to ascertain the true time for us. My complaint was long, and lasted till having turned into the grass walk, we reached the new building at the end of it; where we sat awhile and reposed ourselves. In a few minutes we returned by the way we came, when what think you was my astonishment to see what I had not seen before, though I had passed close by it, a smart sun-dial mounted on a smart stone pedestal! I assure you it seemed the effect of conjuration. I stopped short, and exclaimed,— "Why, here is a sun-dial, and upon our ground! How is this? Tell me, Sam, how came it here? Do you know any thing about it?" At first I really thought (that is to say, as soon as I could think at all)

that this fac-totum of mine, Sam Roberts, having often heard me deplore the want of one, had given orders for the supply of that want himself, without my knowledge, and was half pleased and half offended. But he soon exculpated himself by imputing the fact to you. It was brought up to Weston (it seems) about noon: but Andrews stopped the cart at the blacksmith's, whence he sent to inquire if I was gone for my walk. As it happened, I walked not till two o'clock. So there it stood waiting till I should go forth, and was introduced before my return. Fortunately too I went out at the church end of the village, and consequently saw nothing of it. How I could possibly pass it without seeing it, when it stood in the walk, I know not, but it is certain that I did. And where I shall fix it now, I know as little. It cannot stand between the two gates, the place of your choice, as I understand from Samuel, because the hay-cart must pass that way in the season. But we are now busy in winding the walk all round the orchard, and in doing so shall doubtless stumble at last upon some open spot that will suit it.

There it shall stand, while I live, a constant monument of your kindness.

I have this moment finished the twelfth book of the Odyssey; and I read the Iliad to Mrs. Unwin every evening.

The effect of this reading is, that I still spy blemishes, something at least that I can mend, so that after all, the transcript of alterations, which you and George have made, will not be a perfect one. It would be foolish to forego an opportunity of improve-

ment for such a reason; neither will I. It is ten o'clock, and I must breakfast. Adieu, therefore, my dear Johnny! Remember your appointment to see us in October.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 8, 1793.

Non sum quod simulo, my dearest brother! I seem cheerful upon paper sometimes, when I am absolutely the most dejected of all creatures. Desirous however to gain something myself by my own letters, unprofitable as they may and must be to my friends, I keep melancholy out of them as much as I can, that I may, if possible, by assuming a less gloomy air, deceive myself, and, by feigning with a continuance, improve the fiction into reality.

So you have seen Flaxman's figures, which I intended you should not have seen till I had spread them before you. How did you dare to look at them? You should have covered your eyes with both hands. I am charmed with Flaxman's Penelope, and though you do not deserve that I should, will send you a few lines, such as they are, with which she inspired me the other day while I was taking my noon-day walk.

I know not that you will meet any body here, when we see you in October, unless perhaps my Johnny should happen to be with us. If Tom is charmed with the thoughts of coming to Weston, we are equally

so with the thoughts of seeing him here. At his years I should hardly hope to make his visit agreeable to him, did I not know that he is of a temper and disposition that must make him happy every where. Give our love to him. If Romney can come with you, we have both room to receive him, and hearts to make him most welcome.

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Sept. 15, 1793.

A THOUSAND thanks, my dearest Catharina, for your pleasant letter; one of the pleasantest that I have received since your departure. You are very good to apologize for your delay, but I had not flattered myself with the hopes of a speedier answer. Knowing full well your talents for entertaining your friends who are present, I was sure you would with difficulty find half an hour that you could devote to an absent one.

I am glad that you think of your return. Poor Weston is a desolation without you. In the mean time I amuse myself as well as I can, thrumming old Homer's lyre, and turning the premises upside down. Upside down indeed, for so it is literally that I have been dealing with the orchard, almost ever since you went, digging and delving it around to make a new walk, which now begins to assume the shape of one, and to look as if some time or other it may serve in that capacity. Taking my usual exercise there the other day with Mrs. Unwin, a wide disagreement between your clock and ours, occasioned me to complain

much, as I have often done, of the want of a dial. Guess my surprise, when at the close of my complaint I saw one—saw one close at my side; a smart one, glittering in the sun, and mounted on a pedestal of stone. I was astonished. "This," I exclaimed, "is absolute conjuration!"—It was a most mysterious affair, but the mystery was at last explained.

This scribble I presume will find you just arrived at Bucklands. I would with all my heart that since dials can be thus suddenly conjured from one place to another, I could be so too, and could start up before your eyes in the middle of some walk or lawn, where you and Lady Frog are wandering.

While Pitcairne whistles for his family estate in Fifeshire, he will do well if he will sound a few notes for me. I am originally of the same shire, and a family of my name is still there, to whom perhaps he may whistle on my behalf, not altogether in vain. So shall his fife excel all my poetical efforts, which have not yet, and I dare say never will, effectually charm one acre of ground into my possession.

Remember me to Sir John, Lady Frog, and your husband;—tell them I love them all. She told me once she was jealous, now indeed she seems to have some reason, since to her I have not written, and have written twice to you. But bid her be of good courage, in due time I will give her proof of my constancy.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Weston, Sept. 29, 1793.

You have done well to leave off visiting, and being visited. Visits are insatiable devourers of time, and fit only for those who, if they did not that, would do nothing. The worst consequence of such departures from common practice is to be termed a singular sort of a fellow, or an odd fish; a sort of reproach that a man might be wise enough to contemn, who had not half your understanding.

I look forward with pleasure to October the eleventh, the day which I expect will be *Albo notandus lapillo*, on account of your arrival here.

Here you will meet Mr. Rose, who comes on the eighth, and brings with him Mr. Lawrence, the painter, you may guess for what purpose. Lawrence returns when he has made his copy of me, but Mr. Rose will remain perhaps as long as you will. Hayley on the contrary will come, I suppose, just in time not to see you. Him we expect on the twentieth. I trust however that thou wilt so order thy pastoral matters, as to make thy stay here as long as possible.

Lady Hesketh, in her last letter, inquires very kindly after you, asks me for your address, and purposes soon to write to you. We hope to see her in November—so that after a summer without company, we are likely to have an autumn and a winter sociable enough.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 5, 1793.

My good intentions towards you, my dearest brother, are continually frustrated; and which is most provoking, not by such engagements and avocations as have a right to my attention, such as those to my Mary, and to the old bard of Greece, but by mere impertinencies, such as calls of civility from persons not very interesting to me, and letters from a distance still less interesting, because the writers of them are strangers. A man sent me a long copy of verses, which I could do no less than acknowledge. They were silly enough, and cost me eighteen pence, which was seventeen pence halfpenny farthing more than they were worth. Another sent me at the same time a plan, requesting my opinion of it, and that I would lend him my name as editor; a request with which I shall not comply, but I am obliged to tell him so, and one letter is all that I have time to dispatch in a day, sometimes half a one, and sometimes I am not able to write at all. Thus it is that my time perishes, and I can neither give so much of it as I would to you or to any other valuable purpose.

On Tuesday we expect company. Mr. Rose and Lawrence the painter. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised, and once more I am made to wish that my face had been moveable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a bandbox, and sent to the artist. These however will be gone, as I believe I told you, before you arrive, at which time I know not that any body will be here, except my

Johnny, whose presence will not at all interfere with our readings. You will not, I believe, find me a very slashing critic;—I hardly indeed expect to find any thing in your Life of Milton that I shall sentence to amputation. How should it be too long? A well written work, sensible and spirited, such as yours was when I saw it, is never so. But however we shall see. I promise to spare nothing that I think may be lopped off with advantage.

I began this letter yesterday, but could not finish it till now. I have risen this morning like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ooze and mud of melancholy. For this reason I am not sorry to find myself at the bottom of my paper, for had I more room perhaps I might fill it all with croaking, and make an heart ache at Eartham, which I wish to be always cheerful. Adieu. My poor sympathising Mary is of course sad, but always mindful of you.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR BROTHER, Oct. 18, 1793.

I HAVE not at present much that is necessary to say here, because I shall have the happiness of seeing you so soon; my time, according to custom, is a mere scrap, for which reason such must be my letter also.

You will find here more than I have hitherto given you reason to expect, but none who will not be happy to see you. These however stay with us but a short time, and will leave us in full possession of Weston on Wednesday next.

I look forward with joy to your coming, heartily wishing you a pleasant journey, in which my poor Mary joins me. Give our best love to Tom; without whom, after having been taught to look for him, we should feel our pleasure in the interview much diminished.

Læti expectamus te puerumque tuum.

W. C.

TO THE REV. J. JEKYLL RYE.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Nov. 3, 1793.

SENSIBLE as I am of your kindness in taking such a journey, at no very pleasant season, merely to serve a friend of mine, I cannot allow my thanks to sleep till I may have the pleasure of seeing you. I hope never to show myself unmindful of so great a favour. Two lines which I received yesterday from Mr. Hurdis, written hastily on the day of decision, informed me that it was made in his favour, and by a majority of twenty. I have great satisfaction in the event, and consequently hold myself indebted to all who at my instance have contributed to it.

You may depend on me for due attention to the honest clerk's request. When he called, it was not possible that I should answer your obliging letter; for he arrived here very early, and if I suffered any thing to interfere with my morning studies, I should never accomplish my labours. Your hint concerning the subject for this year's copy is a very good one, and shall not be neglected.

I remain, sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Nov. 4, 1793.

I SELDOM rejoice in a day of soaking rain like this; but in this, my dearest Catharina, I do rejoice sincerely, because it affords me an opportunity of writing to you, which if fair weather had invited us into the orchard walk at the usual hour, I should not easily have found. I am a most busy man, busy to a degree that sometimes half distracts me; but if complete distraction be occasioned by having the thoughts too much and too long attached to a single point, I am in no danger of it, with such a perpetual whirl are mine whisked about from one subject to another. When two poets meet there are fine doings I can assure you. My Homer finds work for Hayley, and his Life of Milton work for me, so that we are neither of us one moment idle. Poor Mrs. Unwin in the mean time sits quiet in her corner, occasionally laughing at us both, and not seldom interrupting us with some question or remark, for which she is constantly rewarded by me with a "Hush—hold your peace." Bless yourself, my dear Catharina, that you are not connected with a poet, especially that you have not two to deal with; ladies who have, may be bidden indeed to hold their peace, but very little peace have they. How should they in fact have any, continually enjoined as they are to be silent?

* * * * * *

The same fever that has been so epidemic there, has been severely felt here likewise; some have died, and a multitude have been in danger. Two under our own roof have been infected with it, and I am not sure

that I have perfectly escaped myself, but I am now well again.

I have persuaded Hayley to stay a week longer, and again my hopes revive, that he may yet have an opportunity to know my friends before he returns into Sussex. I write amidst a chaos of interruptions: Hayley on one hand spouts Greek, and on the other hand Mrs. Unwin continues talking, sometimes to us, and sometimes, because we are both too busy to attend to her, she holds a dialogue with herself.—Query, is not this a bull—and ought I not instead of dialogue to have said soliloquy?

Adieu! With our united love to all your party, and with ardent wishes soon to see you all at Weston, I remain, my dearest Catharina,

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Nov. 5, 1793.

In a letter from Lady Hesketh, which I received not long since, she informed me how very pleasantly she had spent some time at Wargrave. We now begin to expect her here, where our charms of situation are perhaps not equal to yours, yet by no means contemptible. She told me she had spoken to you in very handsome terms of the country round about us, but not so of our house, and the view before. The house itself however is not unworthy some commendation; small as it is, it is neat, and neater than she is aware of; for my study and the room over it have been

repaired and beautified this summer, and little more was wanting to make it an abode sufficiently commodious for a man of my moderate desires. As to the prospect from it, that she misrepresented strangely, as I hope soon to have an opportunity to convince her by ocular demonstration. She told you, I know, of certain cottages opposite to us, or rather she described them as poor houses and hovels that effectually blind our windows. But none such exist. On the contrary, the opposite object, and the only one, is an orchard, so well planted, and with trees of such growth, that we seem to look into a wood, or rather to be surrounded by one. Thus, placed as we are in the midst of a village, we have none of the disagreeables that belong to such a position, and the village itself is one of the prettiest I know; terminated at one end by the church tower, seen through trees, and at the other, by a very handsome gateway, opening into a fine grove of elms, belonging to our neighbour Courtenay. How happy should I be to show it instead of describing it to you!

Adieu, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Nov. 10, 1793.

You are very kind to consider my literary engagements, and to make them a reason for not interrupting me more frequently with a letter; but though I am indeed as busy as an author or an editor can well be, and am not apt to be overjoyed at the arrival of letters from uninteresting quarters, I shall always I hope have

leisure both to peruse and to answer those of my real friends, and to do both with pleasure.

I have to thank you much for your benevolent aid in the affair of my friend Hurdis. You have doubtless learned ere now that he has succeeded, and carried the prize by a majority of twenty. He is well qualified for the post he has gained. So much the better for the honour of the Oxonian laurel, and so much the more for the credit of those who have favoured him with their suffrages.

I am entirely of your mind respecting this conflagration by which all Europe suffers at present, and is likely to suffer for a long time to come. The same mistake seems to have prevailed as in the American business. We then flattered ourselves that the colonies would prove an easy conquest; and when all the neighbour nations armed themselves against France, we imagined, I believe, that she too would be presently vanquished. But we begin already to be undeceived, and God only knows to what a degree we may find we have erred at the conclusion. Such however is the state of things all around us, as reminds me continually of the Psalmist's expression—"*He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*"—And I rather wish than hope in some of my melancholy moods that England herself may escape a fracture.

I remain truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston, Nov. 24, 1793.

THOUGH my congratulations have been delayed, you have no friend, numerous as your friends are, who has more sincerely rejoiced in your success than I. It was no small mortification to me to find that three out of the six whom I had engaged, were not qualified to vote. You have prevailed however, and by a considerable majority; there is therefore no room left for regret. When your short note arrived which gave me the agreeable news of your victory, our friend of Eartham was with me, and shared largely in the joy that I felt on the occasion. He left me but a few days since, having spent somewhat more than a fortnight here; during which time we employed all our leisure hours in the revisal of his Life of Milton. It is now finished, and a very finished work it is; and one that will do great honour, I am persuaded, to the biographer, and the excellent man of injured memory who is the subject of it. As to my own concern with the works of this first of poets, which has been long a matter of burthensome contemplation, I have the happiness to find at last that I am at liberty to postpone my labours. While I expected that my commentary would be called for in the ensuing spring, I looked forward to the undertaking with dismay, not seeing a shadow of probability that I should be ready to answer the demand. For this ultimate revisal of my Homer, together with the notes, occupies completely at present (and will for some time longer) all the little leisure that I have for

study: leisure which I gain at this season of the year by rising long before daylight.

You are now become a nearer neighbour, and as your professorship, I hope, will not engross you wholly, will find an opportunity to give me your company at Weston. Let me hear from you soon, tell me how you like your new office, and whether you perform the duties of it with pleasure to yourself. With much pleasure to others you will, I doubt not, and with equal advantage.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Nov. 29, 1793.

I HAVE risen while the owls are still hooting, to pursue my accustomed labours in the mine of Homer; but before I enter upon them, shall give the first moment of daylight to the purpose of thanking you for your last letter, containing many pleasant articles of intelligence, with nothing to abate the pleasantness of them, except the single circumstance that we are not likely to see you here so soon as I expected. My hope was, that the first frost would bring you, and the amiable painter with you. If, however, you are prevented by the business of your respective professions, you are well prevented, and I will endeavour to be patient. When the latter was here, he mentioned one day the subject of Diomede's horses, driven under the axle of his chariot by the thunderbolt which fell at their feet, as a subject for his pencil. It is certainly a noble one, and therefore worthy of his study and attention. It

occurred to me at the moment, but I know not what it was that made me forget it again the next moment, that the horses of Achilles flying over the foss, with Patroclus and Automedon in the chariot, would be a good companion for it. Should you happen to recollect this, when you next see him, you may submit it, if you please, to his consideration. I stumbled yesterday on another subject, which reminded me of said excellent artist, as likely to afford a fine opportunity to the expression that he could give it. It is found in the shooting-match in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, between Meriones and Teucer. The former cuts the string with which the dove is tied to the mast-head, and sets her at liberty; the latter standing at his side, in all the eagerness of emulation, points an arrow at the mark with his right hand, while with his left he snatches the bow from his competitor. He is a fine poetical figure; but Mr. Lawrence himself must judge whether or not he promises as well for the canvass.

He does great honour to my physiognomy by his intention to get it engraved; and though I think I foresee that this *private publication* will grow in time into a publication of absolute publicity, I find it impossible to be dissatisfied with any thing that seems eligible both to him and you. To say the truth, when a man has once turned his mind inside out for the inspection of all who choose to inspect it, to make a secret of his face seems but little better than a self-contradiction. At the same time, however, I shall be best pleased if it be kept, according to your intentions, as a rarity.

I have lost Hayley, and begin to be uneasy at not hearing from him: tell me about him when you write.

I should be happy to have a work of mine embellished by Lawrence, and made a companion for a work of Hayley's. It is an event to which I look forward with the utmost complacence. I cannot tell you what a relief I feel it, not to be pressed for Milton.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Weston, Dec. 8, 1793.

In my last I forgot to thank you for the box of books, containing also the pamphlets. We have read, that is to say my cousin has who reads to us in an evening, the history of Jonathan Wild; and found it highly entertaining. The satire on great men is witty, and I believe perfectly just: we have no censure to pass on it, unless that we think the character of Mrs. Heartfree not well sustained,—not quite delicate in the latter part of it,—and that the constant effect of her charms upon every man who sees her has a sameness in it that is tiresome, and betrays either much carelessness, or idleness, or lack of invention. It is possible indeed that the author might intend by this circumstance a satirical glance at novelists, whose heroines are generally all bewitching; but it is a fault that he had better have noticed in another manner, and not have exemplified in his own.

The first volume of *Man as he is* has lain unread in my study window this twelvemonth, and would have been returned unread to its owner, had not my cousin,

come in good time to save it from that disgrace. We are now reading it, and find it excellent,—abounding with wit and just sentiment, and knowledge both of books and men.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 8, 1793.

I HAVE waited, and waited impatiently, for a line from you, and am at last determined to send you one, to inquire what is become of you, and why you are silent so much longer than usual.

I want to know many things which only you can tell me, but especially I want to know what has been the issue of your conference with Nicol. Has he seen your work? I am impatient for the appearance of it, because impatient to have the spotless credit of the great poet's character, as a man and a citizen, vindicated as it ought to be, and as it never will be again.

It is a great relief to me that my Miltonic labours are suspended. I am now busy in transcribing the alterations of Homer, having finished the whole revisal. I must then write a new Preface, which done, I shall endeavour immediately to descant on *The Four Ages*.

Adieu, my dear brother,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 17, 1793.

O Jove! and all ye Gods! grant this my son
To prove, like me, pre-eminent in Troy;
In valour such, and firmness of command!
Be he extoll'd, when he returns from fight,
As far his sire's superior! may he slay
His enemy, bring home his gory spoils,
And may his mother's heart o'erflow with joy!

I ROSE this morning at six o'clock, on purpose to translate this prayer again, and to write to my dear brother. Here you have it, such as it is,—not perfectly according to my own liking, but as well as I could make it, and I think better than either yours or Lord Thurlow's. You with your six lines have made yourself stiff and ungraceful, and he with his seven has produced as good prose as heart can wish, but no poetry at all. A scrupulous attention to the letter has spoiled you both; you have neither the spirit nor the manner of Homer. A portion of both may be found I believe in my version, but not so much as I wish;—it is better however than the printed one. His Lordship's two first lines I cannot very well understand; he seems to me to give a sense to the original that does not belong to it. Hector, I apprehend, does not say, "Grant that he may prove himself my son, and be eminent, &c.;—but grant that this my son may prove eminent,"—which is a material difference. In the latter sense I find the simplicity of an ancient; in the former, that is to say, in the notion of a man

proving himself his father's son by similar merit, the finesse and dexterity of a modern. His lordship too makes the man who gives the young hero his commendation, the person who returns from battle; whereas Homer makes the young hero himself that person; at least if Clarke is a just interpreter, which I suppose is hardly to be disputed.

If my old friend would look into my Preface, he would find a principle laid down there, which perhaps it would not be easy to invalidate, and which properly attended to would equally secure a translation from stiffness, and from wildness. The principle I mean is this—"Close, but not so close as to be servile! free, but not so free as to be licentious!" A superstitious fidelity loses the spirit, and a loose deviation the sense of the translated author: a happy moderation in either case is the only possible way of preserving both.

Thus have I disciplined you both; and now, if you please, you may both discipline me. I shall not enter my version in my book till it has undergone your strictures at least; and should you write to the noble critic again, you are welcome to submit it to his. We are three awkward fellows, indeed, if we cannot amongst us make a tolerably good translation of six lines of Homer.

Adieu!

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, Weston, Jan. 5, 1794.

I HAVE waited, but waited in vain, for a propitious moment, when I might give my old friend's objections the consideration they deserve; I shall at last be forced to send a vague answer, unworthy to be sent to a person accustomed, like him, to close reasoning and abstruse discussion, for I rise after ill rest, and with a frame of mind perfectly unsuited to the occasion. I sit too at the window for light's sake, where I am so cold that my pen slips out of my fingers. First, I will give you a translation *de novo* of this untranslateable prayer. It is shaped as nearly as I could contrive to his lordship's ideas, but I have little hope that it will satisfy him.

> Grant Jove, and all ye gods, that this my son
> Be, as myself have been, illustrious here!
> A valiant man! and let him reign in Troy;
> May all who witness his return from fight
> Hereafter, say——he far excels his sire;
> And let him bring back gory trophies, stripp'd
> From foes slain by him, to his mother's joy.

Imlac, in Rasselas, says—I forget to whom—"You have convinced me that it is impossible to be a poet." In like manner I might say to his Lordship, you have convinced me that it is impossible to be a translator; to be a translator, on his terms at least, is, I am sure, impossible. On his terms I would defy Homer himself, were he alive, to translate the Paradise Lost into Greek. Yet Milton had Homer much in his eye when he composed that poem. Whereas Homer never

thought of me or my translation. There are minutiæ in every language, which transfused into another will spoil the version. Such extreme fidelity is in fact unfaithful; such close resemblance takes away all likeness. The original is elegant, easy, natural; the copy is clumsy, constrained, unnatural. To what is this owing? To the adoption of terms not congenial to your purpose, and of a context such as no man writing an original work would make use of. Homer is every thing that a poet should be. A translation of Homer so made, will be every thing that a translation of Homer should not be: because it will be written in no language under heaven;—it will be English, and it will be Greek; and therefore it will be neither. He is the man, whoever he be,—(I do not pretend to be that man myself;) he is the man best qualified as a translator of Homer, who has drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius, till he has imbibed their colour to the bone; and who, when he is thus dyed through and through, distinguishing between what is essentially Greek, and what may be habited in English, rejects the former, and is faithful to the latter, as far as the purposes of fine poetry will permit, and no further: this, I think, may be easily proved. Homer is every where remarkable either for ease, dignity, or energy of expression; for grandeur of conception, and a majestic flow of numbers. If we copy him so closely as to make every one of these excellent properties of his absolutely unattainable, which will certainly be the effect of too close a copy, instead of translating we murder him. Therefore, after all that his Lordship has said, I still hold

freedom to be an indispensable. Freedom, I mean, with respect to the expression; freedom so limited, as never to leave behind the *matter;* but at the same time indulged with a sufficient scope to secure the spirit, and as much as possible of the manner. I say as much as possible, because an English manner must differ from a Greek one, in order to be graceful, and for this there is no remedy. Can an ungraceful, awkward translation of Homer be a good one? No. But a graceful, easy, natural, faithful version of him, will not that be a good one? Yes. Allow me but this, and I insist upon it, that such a one may be produced on my principles, and can be produced on no other.

I have not had time to criticise his Lordship's other version. You know how little time I have for any thing, and can tell him so.

Adieu! my dear brother. I have now tired both you and myself; and with the love of the whole trio, remain,

Yours ever,

W. C.

Reading his Lordship's sentiments over again, I am inclined to think that in all I have said, I have only given him back the same in other terms. He disallows both the absolute *free*, and the absolute *close;*—so do I; and, if I understand myself, have said so in my Preface. He wishes to recommend a medium, though he will not call it so; so do I: only we express it differently. What is it then we dispute about? My head is not good enough to-day to discover.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, July 29, 1798.

FEW letters have passed between us, and I was never so incapable of writing as now, nor ever so destitute of a subject. It is long since I received your last, to which I have as yet returned no answer; nor is it possible that, though I write, I should even now reply to it. It contained, I remember, many kind expressions, which would have encouraged, perhaps, and consoled any other than myself; but I was, even then, out of the reach of all such favourable impressions, and am at present less susceptible of them than at any time since I saw you last. I once little thought to see such days as these, for almost in the moment when they found me there was not a man in the world who seemed to himself to have less reason to expect them. This you know; and what can I say of myself that you do not know?

I will only add, therefore, that we are going to the sea-side to-morrow, where we are to stay a fortnight; at the end of which time may I expect to find a letter from you directed to me at Dereham?

I remain, in the meantime,
Yours as usual,
WM. COWPER.

Mr. Johnson is well, and desires to be kindly remembered to you.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

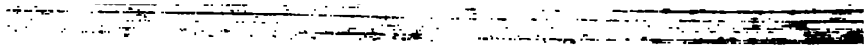
DEAR SIR, Dereham, April 11, 1799.

YOUR last letter so long unanswered may, and indeed must, have proved sufficiently that my state of mind is not now more favourable to the purpose of writing than it was when I received it; for had any alteration in that respect taken place, I should certainly have acknowledged it long since, or at whatsoever time the change had happened, and should not have waited for the present call upon me to return you my thanks at the same time for the letter and for the book which you have been so kind as to send me. Mr. Johnson has read it to me. If it afforded me any amusement, or suggested to me any reflections, they were only such as served to embitter, if possible, still more the present moment, by a sad retrospect to those days when I thought myself secure of an eternity to be spent with the spirits of such men as He whose life afforded the subject of it. But I was little aware of what I had to expect, and that a storm was at hand which in one terrible moment would darken, and in another still more terrible blot out that prospect for ever.

Adieu, dear sir, whom in those days I called dear friend, with feelings that justified the appellation.

I remain yours,

WM. COWPER.



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

The river Ouse is the most agreeable circumstance in this part of the world, vol. iii. p. 142.—" Ouse's *silent* tide," and the windings of the stream, not without charms to the muse of Cowper, and noticed by him in his tale of the Dog and Water Lily, are among the thousand instances of his minutely faithful allusions. The Ouse flows with a lazy and consequently *silent* progress, its whole descent to the sea being very trifling. It is remarkable for the wildest sinuosities, and a singularly tortuous course, from its very source at Ouse Well, near the manor house of Steane in Northamptonshire. The following Leonine verses of a monk in the twelfth century (Bodleian MS. 535) describe the character of the Ouse, (and of its tributary stream the Ivel,) with topical accuracy, though not with poetical elegance :—

Est quidam Fluvius, *vario sinuamine* tensus,
Tractibus obliquus, quosdam relegens comitatus . . . .
Ast, alio de fonte satus *dat abunde meatus;*
Heblus et Ousa sui prisci dixêre coloni.

Drayton (Polyolbion, song xxii.) describes its serpentine course with the same fidelity.—G. C. G.

Drayton's lines will be found in the text (vol. i. p. 204). " The Leonine verses are from an ancient Life of St. Neots, probably by a monk of St. Neots. Both extracts form a good commentary on these lines in the Task, book i.

Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain,
Conducts the eye along her sinuous course.

G. C. G.

——— o'er plains we ride,
Where Ouse conducts his silver tide;
So slow his winding waters stray,
He seems to linger on his way,

As loth to leave the pleasing scene
Of woods, corn-fields, and pastures green.
Thus man, low-grovelling, like the river,
Would loiter in this life for ever;
So beautiful these scenes appear,
He thinks it better to be here
Than try that country, from whose bourn
No pale-eyed travellers return.

Journal of a Five Days Journey to Doncaster, wrote with a pencil, in a chaise.—*Poetical Calendar*, vol. ix. p. 107.

Another acquaintance I have lately made is with a Mr. Nicholson, a north country divine, very poor, but very good and very happy. He reads prayers here twice a day all the year round, and travels on foot to serve two churches every Sunday through the year, his journey out and home again being sixteen miles. 1765. Vol. iii. p. 261. The Rev. Isaac Nicholson was born in 1730, near Wigton, in Cumberland. The curacies to which he walked every Sunday from Huntingdon were Papworth St. Agnes, in Cambridgeshire, and Yelling, in Huntingdonshire, the latter curacy he held during the first year of Mr. Venn's incumbency, 1770–1. Mr. Venn writes thus, (June 3, 1775,) "Mrs. Nicholson (in whose death-bed testimony I have lately had a delightful cordial,) was the wife of the assistant I had for the first year I was at Yelling; and as soon as she heard she obeyed. She became a most earnest, though a trembling seeker of her Lord, and last Thursday I preached her funeral sermon. She left a husband and four young children; and her last words were sweet indeed, 'Trust, O trust,' said she, 'in Jesus all of you! for he has proved faithful to his promises, and fulfilled all my desires.'"

Mr. Nicholson died in , vicar of Leighton Bromswold, in Huntingdonshire, the parish of the poet Herbert, who built the neat little village church, of which there is an engraving in Zouch's edition of Walton's Lives, and in Major's. He held also at his death the curacy of Alconbury, where he resided, died, and was buried.—G. C. G.

As to the affair of the fortune teller, he never mentioned it to me, nor was there any such paper found as you mention. I looked over

all his papers before I left the place, and had there been such a one, must have discovered it. I have heard the report from other quarters, but no other particulars than that the woman foretold him when he should die, vol. iii. p. 300.—Upon the affair thus mentioned by Cowper, I have been favoured with full particulars in the following letter from a gentleman whose name would authenticate it to the public, if he had not thought proper to withhold it at this time. It is a singularly curious story.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, March 24, 1836.

I am tempted to write to you from reading a passage which a friend pointed out to me, in the volume (edited by you) of Cowper's Works, relating to his brother John Cowper, and to the story of a *fortune-teller's prediction*, which Cowper himself disbelieved, because his brother never mentioned it to him. It is curious enough that I should, at this distant period, be alone perhaps able to give you the particulars of a story so mysterious at the time, and I think you will like to have them, though of no great consequence to your undertaking. It happened, however, that John Cowper, the hero of this marvellous tale, was in his boyhood the school-fellow and early companion of my own father, and continued to be his most intimate and valued friend till his early career was terminated by the death recorded in his brother's letters. My father had the strongest affection for John Cowper's memory, and seldom talked of him without such sorrow for his loss as made him willing to avoid the subject: but I well remember that, when at the age of fourteen or fifteen, I once was running with a shilling to the door at ————, to have my fortune told by some travelling gipsies then begging at it, my father stopped me, and, with more seriousness than I expected, besought me to give him my solemn promise that, as long as I lived, I never would indulge that idle curiosity. Of course I did so, and enquired the reason, as he might be sure I was not superstitious enough to believe, and must know it was at most but an idle and innocent piece of nonsense. He told me the reason was the effect such predictions had in after life, and in hours of weakness, after some casual circumstance, perhaps, had proved true. He then told me the following story of John Cowper, under circumstances that made at the time so deep an

impression on my mind, that I can trust my memory in spite of the intervening period of nearly fifty years; but in truth it has never been out of my thoughts. John Cowper and my father were both, when children, at a preparatory school, then much frequented, at Felstead, in (I think) Essex. They both together enquired their future fortunes from a traveling gipsy tinker, or pedler, who came to beg at the school, and in an old soldier's red coat. (He was a man, and *not an "old woman,"* as it seems the poet Cowper had been told.) My father said that his own share of the prophecy was commonplace nonsense, which he forgot; but that it was predicted to Cowper that he would only remain a very short time at Felstead, and would, after leaving it, be sent to *a larger school:* that he would go to the university, and, before he left it, would form an attachment strong enough to give him much disappointment, as it would not be mutual: that he would not marry *before* he was thirty, but that *after* that age his fate became obscure, and the lines of his hand showed no more prognostics of futurity." Such was the prediction on which, I suppose, all the other rumours had been founded. It actually happened that, within a very short time, from some family accident, which I have forgot, but I believe the illness or death of a near relation, John Cowper was summoned to go home, by a servant, who came express. There was nothing very marvellous in this coincidence, even supposing it accidental, or in the itinerant prophet having heard of some such illness. Cowper, too, did not return to Felstead, but was sent, I think, to Eton. My father, who was not an Etonian, I believe continued to hear from him; but at all events they again met at the university, where their intimacy was not only renewed, but cemented by the most cordial friendship. It continued after my father left Cambridge, where, if I did not misunderstand him, Cowper continued (at least *occasionally*) to reside. (Was he a fellow of any college?) They saw each other continually, corresponded with each other, and belonged to a set of young friends who, after leaving college, met by agreement annually, for three weeks or a month, at Grantham, and some of them hunted. My father married in a few years, and John Cowper more than once accompanied him and my mother into ———. In these visits he contrived to accomplish another part of the prediction, by becoming much attached to a

younger sister of my father's, who assuredly did not return his affection. All these coincidences made an impression on John Cowper's imagination, and he often reminded my father of their interview with the pedler at Felstead. When Cowper approached the age of thirty, I think, or at least that which the gipsy fixed as the term of his prediction, my father saw him again at Cambridge, I believe in his way to town. Cowper was walking with him in one of the college gardens, in one of the avenues where the gate was open in front of them, and suddenly interrupted the conversation by exclaiming, "Did you see that man pass?" My father, who had observed nothing, asked him what man he meant? John Cowper replied, "The very man you and I met at Felstead, and in a soldier's jacket—I saw him pass the gate!" They both ran to it, but in the public road saw no such person. Cowper said, "It is a warning—you know he could predict nothing of me after my thirtieth year." He mentioned this more than once while my father remained in Cambridge, though not apparently dejected, and I believe in tolerable health. The real circumstances, thus detailed, were probably known only to themselves; and John Cowper does not seem to have made mention of them, except in such illusions as gave rise to the vague reports which his brother disbelieved. It was, however, the last time that my father saw his friend. He sickened, whether from the prediction, or some natural cause, and surrounded by zealous religionists, eager for what is called a conversion, his own old and tried friends were never apprised of his danger, or their letters replied to, till they were shocked by the news of his death. The conversion boasted of was, probably, from one set of religious opinions to another, whether better or worse; but, from all I could learn, certainly not from *profligacy* to *penitence*, because John Cowper does not appear to have been a dissolute man. I infer this from the kind and respectful manner in which my mother, as well as my father, always spoke of their early friend, and of his habits, which had certainly endeared his memory to both of them. My father never, I think, heartily forgave his brother and the Methodists, for the cruel scruples which prevented him from being told of his friend's danger, and denied him the consolation of a last interview,—of which, even when he told me this, being nearly twenty years after it happened, he spoke with tears. You will

probably infer from this story, that the dejection of John Cowper's spirits in illness, and the fancied apparition of the gipsy pedler, were but too surely indications of the same constitutional malady, which so often embittered the existence of his surviving brother.

"I cannot doubt that this singular story will be interesting to you, and you are most welcome to it, as I can assure you it is authentic in all the facts; but I should be sorry to have my name and my father's attached to it, at least in print, because I am neither prepared for a paper-war, or ready, at the distance of fifty years, to vouch for the exact *minutiæ* of the places and dates which my memory seems to recall. Some critic might triumph in proving that John Cowper was thirty-one, or two, when he died, or that he was somewhere else and not at Cambridge the year before. You know enough of this kind of cavil, not to wonder at my wish to avoid it. The story of John Cowper's conversion has also been long since bandied about in religious and literary gossip, and belief in his former sinfulness, and that of all his early companions, was, and perhaps still is, an article of party faith with the professors, which it would be hazardous to controvert, especially as it happened before I was born."

The account which I have been able to collect of John Cowper must be reserved for the supplemental volume, with other materials concerning the literary history of the Cowper family.

Lady Austen, vol. iv. p. 118.—Hayley speaks thus of this lady, from whom he obtained much valuable information, and who died while his Life of Cowper was in the press.

"Her maiden name was Richardson; she was married very early in life to Sir Robert Austen, Baronet, and resided with him in France, where he died. Her intercourse with Cowper is already related;—in a subsequent period she was married to a native of France, Mr. De Tardiff, a gentleman and a poet, who has expressed, in many elegant French verses, his just and deep sense of her accomplished, endearing character. In visiting Paris with him in the course of the summer of 1802, she sunk under the fatigue of the excursion, and died in that city on the 12th of August.

"My obligations to her kindness induce me to terminate this

brief account of a person so cordially regarded by Cowper, and so instrumental to the existence of his greatest work, with an offering of respect and gratitude, in the shape of

AN EPITAPH.

Honour and Peace! ye guardians kindly just,
Fail not in duty to this hallowed dust!
And mortals (all, whose cultured spirits know
Joys that pure faith and heavenly verse bestow,)
Passing this tomb, its buried inmate bless,
And obligation to her powers confess,
Who, when she graced this Earth, in Austen's name,
Waked in a Poet Inspiration's flame;
Removed by counsel, like the voice of spring,
Fetters of diffidence from fancy's wing;
Sent the freed eagle in the sun to bask,
And from the mind of Cowper—call'd the Task!

"I close my work with these verses, from a persuasion, that I can pay no tribute to the memory of Cowper more truly acceptable to his tender spirit, than praise sincerely bestowed on the objects of his affection."

Mr. Raban, vol. iv. 140.—There is an account of Thomas Raban in the Evangelical Biography, (1807,) vol. iv. His grandfather was a French refugee. He was born at Turvey, in Bedfordshire, 1734, the youngest son of parents in middling circumstances, and having been made a ready accountant under the instruction of a clergyman, was apprenticed to a carpenter and builder at Olney in 1748, at which time, in the language of the professors, "the gospel began to be preached in Olney church, Mr. Moses Browne, author of Sunday Thoughts, being inducted to the living, and through an indulgent Providence it has continued there ever since." "Raban then attended the church, and became the stated hearer and affectionate friend of Moses Browne." Sometimes also he attended on Mr. Hervey's ministry. He says of Whitefield, "I once had the honour of having him hang on my arm, and to be sure I thought myself the happiest of men. Also at another time I attended him as a guide to a village, where he was going to preach, to my unspeakable gratification."

"About 1778, a new scene opened before him; through the solicitation of others, and in conjunction with an intimate friend, he began to exhort at a prayer-meeting, attended by members of the establishment. They persevered in this practice some time, solely," says the memorialist, "with a view of being serviceable to their fellow-christians in that neighbourhood, though the Lord, by this step, was preparing them for spheres of usefulness in another direction, and the great Bishop of Souls soon found employment for both of them."

These meetings accorded better with Mr. Newton's views than with those of his successor in the curacy; and the annexed fragment of a letter from Cowper to the former, shows that when Raban found fault with Mr. Page's sermons, the curate retaliated upon his carpentry.

MY DEAR SIR, August 31, 1780.

THE curate and churchwarden,
And eke exciseman too,
Have treated poor Tom Raban
As if he was a Jew.

For they have sent him packing,
No more in church to work,
Whatever may be lacking;
As if he was a Turk.

Thus carry they the farce on,
Which is great cause of grief,
Until that *Page* the parson
Turn over a *new leaf*.
Thus sings the Muse, and though her fav'rite cue
Is fiction, yet her song is sometimes true.

At least we are much misinformed if the foregoing tale be not so. Bright Andrews's son is employed as church-carpenter instead of Mr. Raban, and another man has been employed to make sixteen coffins, though if Mr. Raban had not sold him the boards, he could not have found materials to make them with. Besides all this, we have heard a rumour which at present is so confused and full of obscurity as not to be quite intelligible, that a storm is gathering from the D————h quarter, which

threatens both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Raban. It is said to have been raised by Maurice Smith, whose quarrel with Mr. Raban is that Mr. Page cannot preach to please him. It is certain that the said churchwarden Smith and Tolson the exciseman did lately repair to the house of Mr. Raban, and there expostulate with him in very angry and unhandsome terms upon that subject, which, being equal in zeal and knowledge, they were well qualified to do. Mr. Sample, who happened to be there, was Mr. Raban's second, and had the courage to address himself to Mr. Smith in these terms, 'I'll tell you what, Mr. Smith, I do really think you are a very meddlesome fellow!' What further passed on the occasion we have not heard, nor perhaps would it be worth relating, only as it serves as a specimen of that disorder and confusion into which every thing has been thrown in this parish, by Mr. Browne's two unhappy appointments."

Without supposing that these disputes induced him to separate himself from the church, it is obvious that such meetings as Mr. Newton had encouraged were likely to become seminaries of dissent. We are told accordingly that Mr. Raban's "gifts for prayer and public exhortation" having been acknowledged to be profitable in this training school, he "received a call," in 1783, from the congregation at Yardley, which he accepted, though he continued to reside at Olney, and to follow his business. "This enabled him to serve his flock with scarcely any reward but their affections and prayers." "But his labours were not confined to one spot, for he delighted occasionally to itinerate. He maintained lectures in different places with unwearied perseverance, and it is worthy of remark, that he was the first dissenting minister who established a lecture at Woburn, where there is now a settled congregation."

Though Mr. Raban was considered to be skilful in his business, and was in good employ, he gradually withdrew from it, and applied himself to farming during the last twenty years of his life. "Success," his biographer says, "attending him, he gratefully acknowledged the hand of the Lord in providing more comfortably for him as the evening of life came on, than it might otherwise have been." That he was a resolute man appears in Cowper's letters; and he was a kind hearted one also, for though no man was more ready to bring a criminal to justice, yet when firewood had been stolen from his premises,

and he believed that the thief had been induced by poverty to the deed, he observed, that if he had been there he should have turned his head another way, or have said, "Poor fellow! don't overload yourself; and the next time you want fuel, come and ask my leave."

Raban had not less than four marvellous escapes from death. He fell from an unfinished building, two stories high; at another time a large piece of timber, on which he had set his foot, heaved up, and fell with him into a sawpit, and a heavy anvil, connected with the wood, fell also, but only bruised his leg. Again, as he was assisting in raising a beam on a wall, the rope slipped, and the beam fell from the height of four stories, carrying him with it; but though much injured, he escaped with life. Lastly, when driving a team with a load of hay down a narrow lane and attempting to get to the other side of the waggon, he fell under the wheel, but had presence of mind enough to call to the horses to stop, which they did in a moment, and thus he was saved from instantaneous death. Yet after these extraordinary escapes, he died in consequence of his foot slipping over a pebble, as he was leaving a friend's house at Woburn, after preaching there. He broke his leg in the fall, and though for three weeks there was every appearance of recovery, fatal symptoms then came on. Mr. Bull preached his funeral sermon in the market place at Olney, the concourse being too great for the meeting-house.

"Mr. Raban used, in reviewing the goodness of God towards him, to observe how much his case resembled that of Elijah when fed by ravens, in obtaining the most unexpected means of support. Though he felt truly thankful for every instance of kindness shown him, succour often came from a friend the Lord directed to him, and not which he himself had sought." It is added in a note upon this passage, "Mr. Raban often regretted that men of fortune, especially professors of the gospel, did not more readily come forward to assist industrious tradesmen with the loan of a few pounds without interest. A part of the character of a religious man is, 'that he putteth not out his money to usury;' and to this purpose our Lord says, 'Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great.' Bearing these and other scriptures in mind, he contended that the opulent would be no losers, while they would

materially assist a worthy part of the community, who without such assistance often fall into poverty, and struggle with difficulties all their days."

Well indeed would it be, if the money which is worse than wasted upon common vagabonds, were employed in administering efficient help where it is most needed. Dr. Franklin had a method of making his bounty circulate. Sending a bill for ten *Louis d'ors* to an unfortunate American in France, he said to him, "I do not pretend to *give* such a sum, I only *lend* it to you. When you shall return to your country with a good character, you cannot fail of getting into some business that will in time enable you to pay all your debts; in that case, when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him, enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation when he shall be able, and shall meet with such another opportunity. I hope it may thus go through many hands before it meets with a knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford *much* in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning, and make the most of a *little*." I wish Franklin could have told us that this loan answered its purpose, and continued to circulate according to his intentions. Benevolence is so often not only disappointed but deceived, that it is always cheering to hear of an instance in which it has been successfully bestowed. One such has been related to me as pertinent to this subject by an old friend who happened to be present when I was preparing these notes for the press.

Many years ago he was returning to his father's house in the neighbourhood of London, from an evening drill of the regiment of volunteer cavalry, in which he had enlisted as a private, and being dressed accordingly in a flannel jacket, with a watering cap, and a simple light-dragoon's sword girded round his waist, he was accosted by a man of the working class, who was going the same way as himself. From idleness or curiosity, or perhaps flattered at being taken for a real soldier, he availed himself of the incident for his amusement at the moment, and talked with his companion in the tone and style of his assumed character; but he soon found that he had made a false estimate, and had placed himself in a state of unnecessary inferiority.

He therefore raised his style and topics of conversation to a level with those of his new acquaintance, and found him a man habituated to thinking and even to talking well; and when they were about to part company, he enquired his name and calling. He was a shoemaker when good fortune allowed him to be so, but did not in ordinary call himself more than a cobbler, was married, had a family, and carried on his employment in a village not far from the residence of my friend's father. This happened in one of the years of scarcity. Shortly after a subscription was raised in the district for assisting the poor with food, fuel, and clothing, and some of the subscribers made a point of personally attending at the distribution. On Saturday evening, a clean, respectable-looking woman presented herself at the rice-tub in the chapel, and told her name, her husband's employment, the number of their children, and the state of distress to which the pressure of the times had reduced them. These particulars revived my friend's recollection of his meeting with the cobbler,—whose wife she proved to be. He obtained a satisfactory account of his character from some of the poor who knew him, and he desired to see him. The man was not a little surprised at recognising his accidental acquaintance, and gladly accepted the little temporary employment which was given him. He said he only wanted work to regain his station among his neighbours, and that if he was once set agoing again in the world, he had no doubt he should make his way and maintain his family. Some little time after, he applied to my friend for a loan of two pounds. The request was made modestly, but in a manly way, and with a promise to return the sum by instalments of five shillings at the end of every fortnight. The money was advanced, and at the end of the fortnight the first instalment was punctually made.

A quantity of shoe leather was about this time purchased by the subscribers to the charity, with a view of giving employment as well as relief to some of the objects of it. A fair share of this was placed in this poor man's hands. And shortly after, during a morning ride, my friend saw a little party, consisting apparently of a mother and her children, under a large tree in a neighbouring park, seated round a clean table, at their frugal but cheerful holiday meal, and he was not a little gratified at finding it to be the family of his *protégé*.

The instalments were regularly paid, and with the last of them came a letter, written either by the husband or wife, and signed by both. It would be an injustice to quote it partially and from memory, as my friend could only do when he gave me this account. The contents and style, he says, would be creditable to any writer whatsoever.

The honesty of the man, and the efficacy of the mode of relief, had now been fully proved and ascertained. But something more creditable than the composition of the letter was yet to come. The sum originally lent was now offered to him as a gift, and the reasons for taking each instalment explained to him; but he declined it, though it was pressed upon his acceptance. "No, sir," he said, "it would be abusing your kindness. The money has fully answered the purpose for which you lent it to me. I am no longer in want of it, and I should think meanly of myself if I were to take it upon any other plea. Besides, if I were to fall into misfortunes again, I could never have the courage to come to you a second time, and ask for a repetition of such a favour."

It is pleasant to add, that his name and trade, D———, Shoemaker, were long to be seen over the door of a small, neat-looking shop in the village where he resided, and that when he was last heard of, he was considered as an industrious, respectable, and prosperous man by his neighbours.

Henry and Emma, vol. iv. p. 169.—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in one of her admirable letters to the Countess of Bute, says, "I cannot forbear saying something in relation to my grand-daughters, who are very near my heart. If any of them are fond of reading, I would not advise you to hinder them (chiefly because it is impossible,) seeing poetry, plays, or romances; but accustom them to talk over what they read, and point out to them, as you are very capable of doing, the absurdity often concealed under fine expressions, where the sound is apt to engage the admiration of young people. I was so much charmed at fourteen with the dialogue of Henry and Emma, I can say it by heart to this day,—without reflecting on the monstrous folly of the story in plain prose, where a young heiress to a fond father is represented falling in love with a fellow she had only seen as a huntsman, a falconer, and a beggar; and who

confesses, without any circumstance of excuse, that he is obliged to run his country, having newly committed a murder. She ought reasonably to have supposed him at best a highwayman; yet the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him, to live among the banditti, and wait upon his trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company. This senseless tale is, however, so well varnished with melody of words and pomp of sentiments, I am convinced it has hurt more girls than ever were injured by the worst poems extant."—Vol. iv. p. 269.

Remarkable fog of 1783, vol. iv. p. 287.—On this subject Mr. Gorham has favoured me with the following curious note.

"Mr. Grimshawe[1] quotes Lalande for a scientific solution of this phenomenon. Lalande was a first rate astronomer, but, I believe, no meteorologist: at all events, his solution is totally

[1] "It is known to you that for some days past people have been incessantly inquiring what is the occasion of the thick dry fog which almost constantly covers the heavens? And, as this question is particularly pat to astronomers, I think myself obliged to say a few words on the subject, more especially since a kind of terror begins to spread in society. It is said by some, that the disasters in Calabria were preceded by similar weather; and by others, that a dangerous comet reigns at present. In 1773, I experienced how fast conjectures of this kind, which begin amongst the ignorant, even in the most enlightened ages, proceed from mouth to mouth, till they reach the best societies, and find their way even to the public prints. The multitude, therefore, may easily be supposed to draw strange conclusions when they see the sun of a blood colour, shed a melancholy light, and cause a most sultry heat.

"This, however, is nothing more than a very natural effect from a hot sun, after a long succession of heavy rain. The first impression of heat has necessarily and suddenly rarefied a superabundance of watery particles, with which the earth was deeply impregnated, and given them, as they rose, a dimness and rarefaction not usual to common fogs.

"De La Lande."

The danger to which men of philosophical minds seem to be peculiarly exposed is the habit of accounting for the phenomena of nature too exclusively by the operation of mere secondary causes; while the supreme agency of a first Great Cause is too much overlooked. The universality of these appearances occurring at the same time in England, France, Italy, and so many other countries, awakens reflections of a more solemn cast, in a mind imbued with Christian principles. He who reads Professor Barruel's work, and the concurring testimony adduced by Robinson, as to the extent of infidelity and even atheism, gathering at that time in the different states of Europe, might, we think, see in these signs in the moon,

inapplicable to the facts:—the fog was remarkable for the absence of humidity. An equally futile speculation was, that this general and long prevailing obscurity was occasioned by our planet being then immersed in the tail of a comet[2]; a fancy which has been well exposed by a living member of the French Institute, the celebrated M. Arago. See his Notice on Comets[3] (sect. 11, c. iii.) published in the French *Annuaire* for 1832, where will be found the best account of the fog of 1783, and of the probable causes of it.

It commenced nearly on the same day, June 18, at places very distant from each other, as Paris, Avignon, Turin, Padua. It was found by travellers on the highest parts of the Alps. It extended from the northern coast of Africa to Sweden, and over a great part of North America. It continued nearly a month. It was so dense in Languedoc, that the sun was not visible till it was 12° above the horizon, and was afterwards red, and might be viewed by the naked eye without inconvenience. It was chiefly distinguished from ordinary fogs by its *dryness*. At Geneva, Saussure's hair hygrometer stood as low as 68° and even 57°, though it rises to 100° in common fogs. Some meteorologists called it a *smoke;* it had a disagreeble smell. At the period of new moon it shed a light (at midnight) equal to that of the full moon; hence M. Arago conceives that it was phosphorescent.

"Such were *the remarkable phenomena* of 'Nature's sickly eye.' Without incurring Cowper's just censure of 'the spruce Philosopher,' who, 'eagle-eyed in nature's tendencies,' overlooks 'the genuine cause of all,' it is an interesting and rational employment to enquire into the *natural cause* of such 'portentous, unexampled,' but perhaps not altogether 'unexplained' effects. Dr. Franklin suggested an explanation, from the imperfect combustion of an immense *bolide*, passing rapidly through the atmosphere, and spreading torrents of smoke in all direc-

and in the stars, and in the heavens, some intimations of impending judgements, which followed so shortly after; and evidences of the power and existence of that God, which many so impiously questioned and defied."—*Grimshawe's Cowper*, vol. ii. pp. 141—2.

[2] A comet appeared in 1783, but it did not pass its perihelion till November 15, and was never near the earth.

[3] This work was translated by Colonel Gold, and published in 1833.

tions; or in the general dispersion of thick columns of smoke which Mount Hecla projected into the air during the whole summer. M. Arago thinks that these suggestions of the illustrious American philosopher deserve attentive discussion. It is a fact not to be overlooked, that the *most terrible* eruption of Hecla on record took place on the 1st, the 8th, the 18th, and the 22d of June, 1783, and that these convulsions continued till the 9th of August. M. Arago points out, however, a more general cause for the fog or smoke of 1783, in more deeply seated convulsions of the earth, occasioning numerous fissures in its solid covering, through which gaseous vapours and volcanic effluvia escaped, and became widely dispersed. Of these 'fires from beneath,' prevailing to a great extent, there were indications the preceding February, in the frightful Calabrian earthquakes; while the eruption of Hecla was attended by flames bursting from the bosom of the sea, thirty miles from the Icelandic shore.

"The dry fog of 1831, is stated by M. Arago to have resembled, in many particulars, that of 1783.

"Arguing against the conjecture that the earth was at that time plunged *in the tail of a comet*, M. Arago shows the physical impossibility of a comet's train remaining in the vicinity of the earth for above a month. It is an unfortunate fact for the absurd supposition which he refutes, that the only comet which appeared in 1783 was an insignificant cloudy vapour, invisible to the naked eye, *without a tail*, and never nearer to the earth than fifty millions of miles: its nearest approach was on the 15th of November, long *after* the fog had been dispersed; consequently *during* the fog of the preceding summer it must have been at an immense distance. (See Pingré, *Cometographie*[3], tome ii. p. 511. Paris, 1784, 4to.)

"*What* has not been laid to the charge of these 'wandering stars?'—wars, pestilence, &c. &c. 'Would to God,' writes Thomas Erastus, about the middle of the sixteenth century, 'that wars had no other cause than the bile of princes heated by the influence of comets! A skilful physician, with a small dose of rhubarb, or of syrup of roses, might have easily brought back

[3] In a newspaper article in which this work was frequently quoted, this word was printed "Comet's Graphic."

the sweets of peace.' (Quoted by Pingré, tom. ii. p. 150.)—G. C. G."

M. le Roy, in a Memoir upon this fog, read before the Royal Academy of Sciences in the autumn of the same year, said the only one resembling it, of which he had found any notice was in the year 1252.

I give you joy of a thaw, that has put an end to a frost of nine weeks continuance, with very little interruption,—the longest that has happened since the year 1739. *I suppose it is a universal blessing, and probably felt all over Europe.* Feb. 22, 1784. Vol. iv. pp. 344–6.—This frost was of longer continuance in France. It began early in December, and the minister of police had in consequence more arduous duties to fulfil than had ever fallen upon any of his predecessors. Government issued money to the *curés* and to the commissary of police to provide the destitute with fuel and bread; and the king, in authorising the minister of finance to issue whatever sums might be necessary for this purpose, said to him, *Qu'il n'y avoit aucune dépense qui ne dût être retrenchée, s'il le falloit, pour celle-la.* A heavy snow had fallen, and lay so deep in Paris, that it was hopeless to attempt clearing it. *On calcule qu'il y a sur la surface de cette capitale quarante-huit lieues de rues à nettoyer. On voit qu'il en résulteroit une multitude de bras, de voitures, et de chevaux, effrayante seulement à l'imagination, et une dépense encore qui feroit tort aux objets de charité plus pressans.* To keep the communications open was all that could be done. On February 3, the quantity of wood in the capital amounted only to seventy thousand loads, and six thousand of these being carried off in one day, guards were stationed at the wood-yards, and an ordonnance was issued that no individual should purchase more than half a load at one time. Many people began to make use of pit-coal, but this was no sooner in demand than it failed; and it was but cold comfort for the Parisians to be told that two hundred thousand cords of wood were detained by the state of the weather, on the way, ten leagues off. Ten thousand loads were placed in reserve for the bakers, and there was so much reason to fear lest the rest should be consumed before the navigation of the river would be open, that the Treasury advanced money for bringing thirty thousand loads by land, and

at the same time, to dimish the consumption, it was proposed that all bishops, abbés, monks, intendants, magistrates, and other persons whatever, holding any office in the provinces, should repair to their respective posts; and that all persons who had houses in the provinces should be invited to go to them without delay. But these measures were deemed to be inefficient and too slow in their operation. All the horses and carts which could be procured without stopping the supplies of food, were put in request for this service; and many of the citizens furnished such means of conveyance as they possessed, and all were invited to do so, as it was difficult to procure enough; when on February 21, after seventy-six days of almost uninterrupted frost, the thaw began."—*Mem. Secrets*, tom. xxv.

Caraccioli, vol. v. p. 8.—"The following cursory remarks of Cowper appear highly worthy of preservation. They were written on separate scraps of paper without any title, and may find perhaps their most suitable place as a sequel to the letter in which he quoted the writer, whose character he has sketched at full length, and with a masterly hand."—*Hayley*.

"Caraccioli appears to me to have been a wise man, and I believe he was a good man in a religious sense. But his wisdom and his goodness both savour more of the philosopher than the Christian. In the latter of these characters he seems defective principally in this,—that instead of sending his reader to God as an inexhaustible source of happiness to his intelligent creatures, and exhorting him to cultivate communion with his Maker, he directs him to his own heart, and to the contemplation of his own faculties and powers, as a never-failing spring of comfort and content. He speaks even of the natural man as made in the image of God, and supposes a resemblance of God to consist in a sort of independent self-sufficing and self-complacent felicity, which can hardly be enjoyed without the forfeiture of all humility, and a flat denial of some of the most important truths in Scripture.

"As a philosopher he refines to an excess, and his arguments instead of convincing others, if pushed as far as they would go, would convict him of absurdity himself. When, for instance, he would depreciate earthly riches by telling us, that gold and

diamonds are only matter modified in a particular way, and thence concludes them not more valuable in themselves than the dust under our feet, his consequence is false, and his cause is hurt by the assertion. It is that very modification that gives them both a beauty and a value—a value and a beauty recognized in Scripture, and by the universal consent of all well-informed and civilized nations. It is in vain to tell mankind that gold and dirt are equal, so long as their experience convinces them of the contrary. It is necessary therefore to distinguish between the thing itself and the abuse of it. Wealth is in fact a blessing when honestly acquired and conscientiously employed: and when otherwise, the man is to be blamed and not his treasure. How does the Scripture combat the vice of covetousness? not by asserting that gold is only earth exhibiting itself to us under a particular modification, and therefore not worth seeking: but by telling us that covetousness is idolatry, that the love of money is the root of all evil, that it has occasioned in some even the shipwreck of their faith, and is always in whomsoever it obtains an abomination.

"A man might have said to Caraccioli, 'give me your purse full of ducats, and I will give you my old wig; they are both composed of the same matter under different modifications.' What could the philosopher have replied? He must have made the exchange or denied his own principles.

"Again, when speaking of sumptuous edifices, he calls a palace an assemblage of sticks and stones which a puff of wind may demolish, or a spark of fire consume; and thinks he has reduced a magnificent building and a cottage to the same level, when he has told us, that the latter viewed through an optic glass may be made to appear as large as the former, and that the former seen through the same glass inverted, may be reduced to the pitiful dimensions of the latter. Has he indeed carried his point? Is he not rather imposing on the judgement of his readers, just as the glass would impose upon their senses? How is it possible to deduce a substantial argument in this case, from an acknowledged deception of the sight? The objects continue what they were, the palace is still a palace, and the cottage is not at all ennobled in reality, though we contemplate them ever so long through an illusive medium. There is in fact a real difference between them, and such a one

as the Scripture itself takes very emphatical notice of, assuring us that in the last day, much shall be required of him to whom much was given; that every man shall be then considered as a steward, and render a strict account of the things with which he was intrusted. This consideration, indeed, may make the dwellers in palaces tremble, who living for the most part in the continued abuse of their talents, squandering and wasting and spending upon themselves their Master's treasure, will have reason enough to envy the cottager whose accounts will be more easily settled. But to tell mankind that a palace and a hovel are the same thing, is to affront their senses, to contradict their knowledge, and to disgust their understandings.

"Herein seems to consist one of the principal differences between Philosophy and Scripture, or the Wisdom of Man and the Wisdom of God. The former endeavours, indeed, to convince the judgement, but it frequently is obliged to have recourse to unlawful means, such as misrepresentation and the play of fancy. The latter addresses itself to the judgement likewise, but it carries its point by awakening the conscience, by enlightening the understanding, and by appealing to our own experience. As Philosophy therefore cannot make a Christian, so a Christian ought to take care that he be not too much a Philosopher. It is mere folly instead of wisdom to forego those arguments, and to shut our eyes upon those motives, which Truth itself has pointed out to us, and which alone are adequate to the purpose; and to busy ourselves in making vain experiments on the strength of others of our own invention. In fact the world, which however it has dared to controvert the authenticity of Scripture, has never been able to impeach the wisdom of its precepts, or the reasonableness of its exhortations, has sagacity enough to see through the fallacy of such reasonings, and will rather laugh at the sage who declares war against matter of fact, than become proselytes to his opinion."

The Marquis de Caraccioli was born at Paris, and was a colonel in the Polish service. "Most of his works, which are very numerous, have been well received," says the Abbé Sabatier de Castres, "by the public, but little praised by men of letters, *(des gens de lettres,)* they no doubt think it amiss that a soldier should choose religious subjects on which to exercise his pen." All however that he has written, when he has known

how to confine himself to morals without touching upon dogmas, shows him to be a judicious author, full of sentiments of honour and religion; a well informed man of letters *(litterateur)* who makes use of his attainments only to adorn virtue and inspire the love of it; an estimable writer, who though without elegance correctness or precision in his style, has nevertheless a tone of warmth and of earnestness in his manner of expressing himself, which makes his works be liked. It may even be said that he has rendered service to the pulpit, or rather to mediocre preachers, who make no scruple of introducing whole passages from his *Jouissance de soi-méme*, from his *Univers Enigmatique*, his *Tableau de la Mort*, and from some of his other writings.

M. de Caraccioli has also published a *Dictionnaire Critique, pittoresque et sentencieux*, in which one is sorry to find language altogether unlike that of his former works. Nothing can be more frivolous either in manner, or in matter[4]."

One of his books, *La Jouissance de soi mesme* provoked some of his readers as much as it pleased those who pilfered from it for their sermons. "Seduced by the epicurean title of self-enjoyment, the sale of the work," says Mr. D'Israeli, "was continual with libertines, who however found nothing but very tedious essays on religion and morality. In the sixth edition the Marquis greatly exults in his successful contrivance, by which means he had punished the vicious curiosity of certain persons, and perhaps had persuaded some whom otherwise his book might never have reached[5]."

His Travels of Reason in Europe were translated into English in 1780. The Monthly Review, after condemning it as a superficial performance, in which "the author aims at the style and manner of Voltaire, but is only the shadow of that admired writer," extracts the following passage, and introduces it with a sneer as a specimen of the author's *profound judgement*.

"He judged that the age gave much into what is merely superficial: that people were less fond of diving into the bottom of things, than of slightly skimming them over; that men of real learning were as scarce as the number of men of wit was increased; that a love of novelty made people invent things as

4 Les Trois Siècles.

5 Curiosities of Literature, vol. ii. p. 60.

absurd as they are ridiculous; that under pretence of aiming at the best, very often burlesque changes were made; that the senses usurped the place of the soul: that the necessary was neglected to hunt after the superfluous: that people allowed themselves every thing because they durst do every thing;—and that independence is the ruin of all good order."

Caraccioli is the reputed author of the letters which he published as Clement the XIVth's. and which are well known by that Pope's name of Ganganelli.

Care vale! sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Namque iterum tecum, sim modo dignus ero.—vol. v. p. 27.

Cowper must certainly (though perhaps unconsciously) have had Lowth's epitaph in his mind.

Cara, vale, ingenio præstans, pietate, pudore,
Et plusquam natæ nomine cara, vale!
Cara Maria, vale! At veniet felicius ævum,
Quando iterum tecum, sim modo dignus, ero.
Cara, redi, lætâ tum dicam voce, paternos
Ejà age in amplexus, cura Maria, redi!"

Dearer than daughter, parallel'd by few,
In genius, goodness, modesty, adieu!
Adieu, Maria! till that day more blest,
When if deserving, I with thee shall rest.
Come, then, thy sire will cry, with joyful strain,
O come to my paternal arms again.

Duncombe.

This is not happily translated, but it is better than Cowper's translation of the part which he has borrowed.

The Reverend Matthew Powley, M.A. vol. v. p. 41.—There is in the parish of Lowther, a small village called Whale, which was anciently held by a family of the name *de Whale.* It is about a mile south from the church, and consists of some eight or ten families, with two or three straggling houses on Whale Moor. In one of those houses Matthew Powley was born, on Sept. 21, 1740. He was educated at the Free Grammar School in Appleby, which Queen Elizabeth had established upon an older foundation, and which under its master, Richard Yates,

was at that time, and continued to be during more than half a century, the best school in these northern counties. There his proficiency was such, that Mr. Yates appointed him his usher. Soon afterwards he was admitted at Queen's College, Oxford, nearly half the foundation of which is said to have been supplied by Yates's pupils: and to that foundation Mr. Powley would certainly have been in due time elected, had it not been for the feeling which prevailed against those who were then classed together under the ill assorted appellations of Methodists and Hutchinsonians.

It was at Oxford that, (in the words of his memorialist in the Christian Observer,) Mr. Powley became, for the first time, "experimentally acquainted with religion, through his attendance on the ministry of a clergyman who preached there at that time with fidelity and success." The clergyman was the noted Mr. Haweis, who then resided in Magdalen Hall, and preached in Magdalen Church. The few young men who became his disciples, met in each other's rooms to read and pray and sing psalms or hymns; this, though not done to be seen of men, could not but be heard of them; it excited derision among their fellows, and that sort of interference on the part of their tutors which was more likely to inflame zeal than to moderate and direct it. Mr. Powley was informed that the heads of the college disapproved of these meetings, and that they insisted upon his promising never to attend again at Mr. Haweis' room, or his church,—a promise which "by the over-persuasion of his friends he was induced to make, though he could not but think it unreasonable." It was soon however found that though the promise was observed to the letter, he had once or twice met Mr. Haweis at a friend's room; and as it shortly after appeared that from scruples of conscience he absented himself from the hall on Christmas day, when the Boar's head, according to immemorial custom in that college, was brought in, and the old carol sung before it, they determined to exclude him from the foundation.

The state of his mind at this time is fully expressed in a statement, preserved among his papers, and entitled, "The Case of the Reverend Mr. Powley, A. M. late of Queen's College, Oxford, who, in the year 1761, was excluded from the foundation, and threatened to be expelled the college, for being ac-

quainted with the Reverend Mr. Haweis; a case which will throw much light upon the late Proceedings against Six Members of St. Edmund's Hall: in a Letter to a Friend." It seems to have been intended for publication at that time, or as materials for some of those persons who were then taking up the cause of the six students. "His conscience," says the writer, "was weak enough to think it wrong to appear at an illicit conventicle held every year in the Bachelor's Common Room on the Boar's-head night. I call it a conventicle upon Dr. Noel's authority, for it is *a private assembly for the exercise of religion*; for you must know, they sing the high praises of God in this private assembly; and praising God surely is an exercise of religion. I call it an illicit conventicle, '*because there are more than five persons assembled there, besides those of the same household*;' yea, I believe I may say there are sometimes fifty and five present. If you would be let into the secret history and know the origin of this festival, I must refer you to the gentlemen of Queen's, who are perfectly acquainted with it. The only thing that I know of it is, that it is said to be kept in commemoration of a great boar that, in the times of popery, is said to have been killed by one of their fraternity with a *Logicæ compendium*, which they say he crammed down his throat, and choked it. In honour of this noble exploit, every person present is to sing a monkish song, in which are these words,

Our steward has provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss.

Now for people sometimes half drunk to pretend to do honour to the King of Bliss, and especially in such a manner, he was so weak as to think had something in it that bordered upon blasphemy, and therefore durst not appear in such an assembly. But as this illicit conventicle to honour the King of Bliss is tolerated in Queen's, yea, countenanced by the fellows of the college, who come on another evening to sing and be merry with the Bachelors; nay, as this is not sufficient, but after prostrating themselves in God's house, and receiving the holy sacrament, the boar's head is immediately ushered into the hall with the same pious hymn, as the first fruits of plentiful gaudy,—as this I say is the case, and he refused to join them, yea intimated that he thought it sinful, no wonder that they

should cry out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is the Boar's-head of Queen's!—therefore reject him as an incurable Methodist. Nor is it any wonder that the governors of the college should be enraged that such an upstart as he should condemn that as sinful, which they could with such glee lick their lips over."

"The Boar's-head, soused," says Hearne, "was anciently the first dish on Christmas Day, and was carried up to the principal table in the hall with great state and solemnity." Upon this occasion a carol was sung, which is thus given in the collection of Christmas Carols printed by Wynkyn de Worde 1521.

A CAROL, BRINGYNG IN THE BORE'S HEED.

Caput Apri differo,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The Bore's heed in hande bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary,
I praye you all synge merely
Qui estis in convivio.

The Bore's heed I understande,
Is the chefe servyce in this lande,
Loke where ever it be fande,
Servite cum cantico.

Be gladde lordes, bothe more and lasse,
For this hath ordeyned our stewarde,
To chere you all this Christmasse,
The Bore's heed with mustarde.

The modernized version, (bearing marks of considerable antiquity itself,) which Mr. Powley could not "away with," and which is still sung at Queen's, Mr. Dibdin has printed in his Typographical Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 252, from a copy supplied to him by a tutor of that college.

The Boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary;
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
Quot estis in convivio:
Caput Apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The Boar's head, as I understand,
Is the rarest dish in all this land;
Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland,
Let us *servire cantico.*
Caput Apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of Bliss;
Which on this day to be served is
In Reginensi atrio.
Caput Apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

A writer in the Christian Observer, in his account of Mr. Powley, (wherein no mention is made of the Boar's head,) says that "his conduct on this occasion secured to him the favourable opinion and good wishes of all respectable persons to whom he was made known; it did more for him: it gained for him the patronage of a man whose praise is in the Gospel, and with whom indeed it is an honour to have been in any way connected. No sooner did a late venerable and excellent divine, (Mr. Venn,) at that time vicar of Huddersfield, hear of it, than with that generosity which ever distinguished him, he instantly resolved to present Mr. Powley to the first vacant chapelry in his church. About three years elapsed from the time of Mr. Powley's entering into holy orders, before an opportunity occurred for the fulfilment of this kind intention, during which time he was employed by the Reverend Brooke Bridges as his curate at Wadenhoe, in Northamptonshire. At length the perpetual curacy of Slaithwaite, in the parish of Huddersfield, becoming vacant, he was licensed to it in the year 1767, upon the nomination of the vicar."

He was then in bad health, and compelled in consequence to leave his cure for awhile, just after he had entered upon it, and try the effect of his native air. Writing to him, August 23, 1767, at Langwathby, near Penrith, (whither he had gone to visit his relations,) Mr. Newton says, "I read your letter at the Great Room. Our people feel and pray for you, and remember your labours among them with much affection. I thank the Lord, and I thank you as the instrument, that when I came

home from Yorkshire, I found them all in peace, and in general in a thriving way. You will always be a welcome visitant at Olney to the people, and particularly to your affectionate friend and brother."

It appears that he went to the Hotwells from thence, and that finding no benefit from the waters there, he derived it from travelling and change of air. Becoming acquainted with Lady Huntingdon, (no doubt through Mr. Haweis's means,) he officiated in her chapel at Bath; and that "the Elect Lady," (as she was called by her flatterers,) highly valued his labours and his correspondence, these extracts from her own letters to him will show.

Feb. 18, 1768.

The situation of my health will excuse my not before this acknowledging your very Christian and obliging letter, and the blessings the Lord has been graciously pleased to convey through your ministry at Bath. I will first praise him for his mercy and goodness to us, and next highly esteem you for your work's sake, which in faithfulness and godly simplicity He has and does so own. The respect I bear you as a minister, the approbation I have of you as a man of sense, and the apparent devotedness of your heart to the Lord, all concur in making me lament your not continuing with me.

Brighthelmstone, June 25, 1768.

I had from Mr. Lloyd to-day a letter, which informs me of your kind intention of fulfilling your obliging engagement of serving the people of Sussex. I am very sensible of this instance of your love, and agree to your time that shall be most convenient. I wrote to Mr. Venn, hoping that by friends and some help in the neighbourhood, your church may be supplied. Mr. Buckley I am sure will help, and Mr. Crook of Leeds, (?) at my request; for our present engagements are so great that we shall not know how to supply our calls and part with any of the assistants that I have: but I pray many may be made willing to help us. Do stay as long as you can when you do come, which will add greatly to the obligation of, dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

S. Huntingdon.

Your very sweet letter I have this moment received; it has been a fresh trial of my faith on this occasion. As I loved and honoured you before, you claim a double portion from all God's faithful people, and among the least of these I desire[6] to be ranked. The cool reception you met with plainly shows the fire was in your heart, they feared from you might be kindled in theirs. Alas, what is all this, my dear Sir? those eyes which are as a flame of fire searching our hearts, cannot behold all this without those eyes of glory being provoked. O my dear Sir, may every charge of blackness attend your character which is, or can be a means of preserving your precious heart faithful in the Lord's sight!

I have repeated accounts of the love honour and respect which our dear people at Bath have to your ministry.

On his return to Slaithwaite, Mr. Newton wrote to congratulate him on his restoration to his people. "I hope," he says, "the Lord will bless you in your habitation, and I shall not be sorry to hear that he is providing you a suitable housekeeper in your house. A partner to share in your comforts and your cares would possibly make your life more agreeable in many respects. If you think so likewise, and commit it to him in prayer, He who provided well for Isaac and Jacob, can likewise provide for you. I think it good news when I hear that a minister, especially a young man, is suitably and prudently married.

"I can with truth assure you that your ministry was both acceptable and profitable to our people. A young lad about fourteen was awakened under you at Olney. He lives at Piddington, about seven miles off, and as the distance is too great for him to attend here statedly, he was lately admitted a member in a Dissenting church at Road, the minister of which is a good man. I have heard that the lad gave a very solid and satisfactory account of his experience when he was received, and that he continues to go on very steadily and well. He has been at Olney two or three times since, and some of our people like him much, but he did not fall in my way. Mr. Carey's maid was under some convictions while you were here, though she seemed to lose them afterwards; but I hope of late the

[6] Lady Huntingdon's handwriting is so difficult, that I cannot be certain whether the word is intended for *desire* or *deserve*.

Lord has been pleased to meet with her again, and I hope she is now in good earnest."

This was soon followed by some advice, characteristically given, concerning the management of his recovered strength. "Use," said Mr. Newton, "all prudent and proper precautions for the preservation of your health, and then be not solicitous about it. It is in the Lord's hands, who upon your first entrance to your parish, brought you down to the borders of the grave, and then brought you up, to show by both what he can do. It would be in vain to try to save ourselves by balking the calls of duty, (I hope he has taught us better than to desire it;) for he could send us sickness in a moment. And on the other hand we need not fear to trust ourselves with him in his service. While he has work for you, you shall find the promise of a renewal of strength to those who wait upon him, made good in both senses to body and soul. If you should have some attendant pains and complaints, it is not, you know, for want of power or love in your great Physician to keep you from them, but because his wisdom sees it best, that a part of your needful cross should be that way. And it is more honourable, as well as more comfortable, to wear out than to rust out. Yet after all, I recommend a prudential regard, to beware of taking colds, and not to hazard your health by labouring beyond your necessary occasions, and the measure of strength he gives you. You have in Mr. Venn an instance that it is not desireable to light the candle at both ends at once. Could he once have held his activity under more restraint, it would have saved him and his many friends much uneasiness. And yet his wounds are honourable wounds: he received them in a good cause, and for a good master. And I think the infirmities of a good constitution broken in the service of the Gospel, must be much less painful than the reflection of having selfishly and fearfully deprived ourselves of opportunities of serving the Lord through an overtenderness for our own dear persons."

His marriage with Miss Unwin, to whom he had been introduced in consequence of his cooperating in Mr. Newton's ministerial operations, took place in 1774. And the time of his residence at Slaithwaite "he was always accustomed to consider as the happiest portion of his life. He was there stationed among a people who knew how to estimate his worth, and his labours were abundantly blessed to the conversion and edifica-

tion of his hearers." The following letter from one of his correspondents shows that those labours were sometimes extended beyond the bounds of his own cure, and that he was threatened with some proceedings in consequence.

TO THE REV. MR. POWLEY, AT SLAITHWAITE, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Leeds, June 22, 1772.

Shall I rejoice that you are brought to suffer for the Lord's sake, or lament that there is so much bitterness in the hearts of our brethren in the flesh, that they will not allow us peaceably to discharge the office which both they and we engaged so solemnly in at our ordination? As you are threatened with a prosecution, I imagine it is some brother clergyman that is stirred up against you, as it was against our dear friend Milner. In your cases I think there is some difference; whether that will make any difference in the legality of your proceedings I know not; but if I rightly understood my friend, I apprehend it will not. When Milner was prosecuted, it was for calling *his own people* together *in his own parish* to exhort them, and pray with them, which he did in the week days, because in winter time he was obliged to get a neighbouring curate to preach to them, the place being too far from Hull for him to serve it and be in time to preach his lecture in the afternoon. The clergyman (one Mr. H———, a very debauched man,) who prosecuted him, went upon the Conventicle Act. Joseph was summoned by writ to appear at the sessions to answer to the crimes of praying with and exhorting his people which were laid to his charge. He appeared undaunted, and on examination pleaded guilty of those *heinous crimes;* but at the same time addressed the magistrates on the bench, desiring them to beware what they did. He was conscious he had done no more than his duty, and was determined in meekness to vindicate what he had done. They pleaded a breach of the Conventicle Act. He apprehended that Act was levelled at the secret combinations of the popish priests at the time it was enacted, and did not mean to lay any restrictions upon the conduct of regular and serious clergy in our own church. They found he talked like one that understood more of the law than they did themselves, and therefore would have dismissed him, on condition he would acknowledge he had done wrong, and

was sorry for it. He was very far from acknowledging any such thing. He stood at Cæsar's judgement seat, and he told them was determined to be tried by the law. If that was against him, he would willingly submit to the punishment it should inflict; if it acquitted him, he should be glad his brethren should know it, who had entered into the ministry not for filthy lucre's sake, but out of love to souls. The justices finding him determined, begun to think it was time to draw their own necks out of the halter, and, therefore, after consulting what they should do, they pretended to find a flaw in the writ, and so quashed the indictment. Thus our friend was dismissed without further trouble.

He had got Lord Mansfield's opinion, who has had trials before him of the same nature, and has given it as his opinion, that the Conventicle Act never was intended to interfere with our own clergy. Mr. Romaine says, that a clergyman might (for any law subsisting to the contrary) preach any where in his own parish or *out of his own parish, sub dio*, without interruption, provided he did not trespass upon any one's property, &c. &c. Mr. Whitefield was prosecuted upon that more than once, but always was acquitted. I would therefore advise you not to fear your enemies, but for your better intelligence write to Mr. Thornton. He gave Milner his intelligence. The Lord be with you and bless you in all your proceedings. The intelligence I have given you in regard to Mr. Romaine's opinion, Mr. Whitefield's trials, and Lord Mansfield, I have copied from Milner's letter, who desired me in that letter to publish our power to our serious brethren.

M. A.

In 1777 Mr. Powley was presented by the king to the vicarage of Dewsbury, through the Earl of Dartmouth's interest. The writer who drew up the account of him in the Christian Observer had "often," he says, "known him to derive comfort amidst many sorrows, from the reflection that his presentation to Dewsbury came to him perfectly unsolicited, and without interference of any kind on his part." In the year following he consulted Mr. Newton upon a matter connected with his rights and duties as vicar of that place. Mr. Newton's reply was preserved among his papers.

TO THE REV. MATTHEW POWLEY, DEWSBURY, YORKSHIRE.

DEAR SIR, August 8, 1778.

I wished to answer your letter immediately; I do answer it as soon as I can, or rather acknowledge it; for to the chief point in it I know not what answer to give, nor need I be ashamed of my ignorance, for Mr. Cowper seems as much at a loss about it as myself.

Something, however, must be said. What you ought to do, I dare not be positive; but I can see one thing you ought not to do,—namely, not to go to law with Sir G. A. Perhaps you cannot do better than to defer all determination till the case happens, and you are under a necessity of acting; committing it in the mean time to the Lord, who has all hearts and events in His hands, who may perhaps in his providence cause some circumstances yet unforeseen to coincide with the vacancy, which may give a plain and pointed direction to your part in the affair.

But supposing it vacant, and every thing else just as it is now, what is to be done? Were the case my own, supposing my right to present indisputable, I should look out for a proper person to offer it to. There are sometimes, and possibly at this time, young men in college, of competent fortunes, who are more solicitous for an open door than a good salary, because they can do without the latter. If such a one would accept your chapelry, Sir G——'s right to withhold the stipend might be talked over afterwards, and with more propriety perhaps by him than by yourself.

You will likewise consider what probability there is of bringing matters amicably to bear by a personal interview with Sir George. Nor do I think it would be an artifice to be ashamed of, (supposing you knew no such person of fortune,) if you fix your eye upon one whom you think suitable, and then let him make interest if he can to come to you through Sir George's recommendation. If you could please him without displeasing yourself, by disposing of the first, you might have a more favourable opportunity for ascertaining the rights of the vicar of Dewsbury, and the curate of Hartshed, at one and the same time.

If after all Sir G—— should persist in recommending one whom you could not in conscience accept, the case speaks for itself,—you must not hurt your own conscience or character to please Sir G——. The only alternative would be to let it lapse to the archbishop. If this was necessary I should think it might be done with such protestations, and details of facts, as might prevent its being used as a prejudice to future vicars. Were things verging to this issue I would wait on the archbishop, and endeavour by a plain undisguised account of matters to gain his confidence, and at the same time to leave with him briefly, but solemnly, the reasons why I durst not be instrumental in appointing an improper person to a cure of souls. Who knows but you might drop something upon this subject, (when properly called to it,) which might find its way to the heart of even an archbishop? Put your trust in the Bishop of souls, and he will bear you through. And I have observed where His cause and service are concerned, simplicity moderation and steadiness have done great and unexpected things.

I wish you likewise just to keep in your eye—the possibility that a man of Sir George's choosing might be the Lord's choice. If you find it most expedient in other respects to oblige Sir G——, and observe the person he proposes to have something hopeful and encouraging about him, I would not have you hastily refuse him merely because he has not attained to a certain standard. Mr. Scott, my neighbour at Weston, was under the Lord's teaching, when hardly any one but myself would believe it, he was so very dark in many things. He now preaches the Gospel as clearly, and with as great a prospect of usefulness, as any one. So it was likewise with Mr. Cadogan. Had Reading been at my disposal, and I had given it him, I should have had all the professing world upon my back; and yet perhaps the event proves, or will prove, that he was the most proper person in the kingdom to have it, and that the thing was of the Lord. Consult your own heart and feelings; seek the Lord by prayer. Take that course at last which you verily believe will be most pleasing to Him, and you will find it right in the end, whether it pleases your fellow worms, or not.

I have only time to say with regard to Slaithwaite, that I am glad no more harm was done. It is a mercy to be kept from

such alarms in public worship. We are liable to them every time we meet, and they are very distressing.

We join in love to you and Mrs. Powley.

I am sincerely yours,

J. NEWTON.

Mr. Thornton was also consulted upon this matter, and returned this judicious reply, (Nov. 6, 1779).

"Respecting the perplexing business of Hartshead, I should hope with prudence and firmness, yet doing all with a becoming kindness and meekness, the difficulty will be less than you apprehend. We often make ourselves troubles, or increase them, by inconsideration and hastiness. You happily steer clear of this danger, and I trust the others will vanish. I should recommend the making the archbishop your friend, and going to him for the information you want about the income, which will carry a much better face than enquiring it out privately; and this may be done by letter as soon as the vacancy happens, if his grace is in town, or it does not suit you to go to him. I think what has been given by Queen Anne's bounty, and the like sum added by Sir George, can't but go to the incumbent, and indeed every thing else that is not by way of present. Yet it seems wisest to endeavour to gain his favour: and therefore, though I would insist on maintaining my right and presenting myself, I would send the person to him for his approval; and if one was disagreeable to him, I would send another, and a third, and so on till I was happy enough to obtain his approval; and if he should prove absurdly unreasonable after your repeated endeavours and study to obtain his favour, then you will be justified in the sight of all, in fixing a proper person, of a truly loving mild cast, that you think will adorn the Gospel of Christ in all things,"

It has been seen in Cowper's correspondence that Mr. Powley was dissuaded by him and Mr. Newton from commencing a controversy with Mr. Fletcher upon the methodistical tenet of Perfection. His opinions indeed were decidedly Calvinistic, and he was a leading member of the Elland Society. The advice of his friends on this occasion saved him probably from some mortification, and certainly from much disquietude. "For meekness and humbleness of mind," says the Christian Observer,

"for sincerity and integrity of heart and life, for love to God and to the souls of men, and for a faithful and laborious discharge of his professional duties, the subject of this memoir was eminently distinguished. His latter years however, notwithstanding the amiable qualities of his mind and the unblameableness of his life, were rendered extremely painful and distressing to him by the perverseness and ingratitude of the people amongst whom he dwelt and laboured, and whose welfare was the object of all others the nearest to his heart. But it is to be hoped that many of those who opposed and persecuted him when living, may learn to reverence his character, and to value the truths which he taught and exemplified, now that he is no more.—In compliance with his dying wish a petition was drawn up in behalf of his curate, and signed by upwards of a thousand resident housekeepers, which was presented by Mr. Fawkes, (one of the county members,) to Lord Grenville, in whom, as prime minister, the right of nomination to the living, on Mr. Powley's death, was vested. The prayer of this petition, (to the honour of Lord Grenville be it spoken,) was no sooner made known to him than it was complied with; and Mr. Powley had the heartfelt satisfaction of knowing before he breathed his last that, at the urgent request of his parishioners themselves, his living was assured to the very person whom he had wished to succeed him. 'Bless God!' he had yet strength to exclaim when the tidings reached him; 'Praise God!' and shortly afterwards he entered into his rest.

"He was interred on Monday, Dec. 26, (1806,) his pall being supported by forty neighbouring clergymen, and an immense number of his parishioners attending him to the grave; and on the following Sunday at least three thousand persons are said to have assembled at his funeral sermon."

Mrs. Powley survived him nearly nine and twenty years. They had no children; and about six years after his death she went to reside with Mr. Kilvington, to whom her husband had given the perpetual curacy of Osset. From that place Mr. Kilvington removed to Ripon, where he built and endowed a handsome church, and where Mrs. Powley died, Nov. 9, 1835, aged eighty-nine. For many years she had looked upon Mr. Kilvington as her best friend, almost idolizing him, and he repaid her with unvarying attention and affection. Her state

of mind was uniformably comfortable and happy; but for some months her intellects had failed, so much so that though Mr. Kilvington died in January, she never understood that he was dead, continually asked for him, and supposed that he was absent on a missionary tour. She had some yearly income; and from her large subscriptions to all the great public charities, and her private benefactions to "suffering Christians," she was considered rich; but this was not the case.

Her will, which had been written some time ago, was characteristic and singular. She specified the number and names of the old women who were to bear her pall, the kind of coffin and the wood of which it was to be made, the hymns which were to be sung at her funeral, and the particular tunes, and the text on which Mr. Kilvington was to preach her funeral sermon, addressing it particularly to the unawakened. Every thing was to be extremely plain, and no scarfs, or gloves, or refreshments to be given; but each of the old women to be rewarded with a dark gown and bonnet, a Bible, and a copy of Boston's Fourfold State. The funeral sermon was performed by my friend and late neighbour, Mr. Whiteside, who had just entered upon the church as Mr. Kilvington's successor. Mrs. Kilvington wished that her late friend's directions should be precisely observed in all points; and it was with no little trouble that some obsolete tunes could be revived for the occasion.

Mrs. Powley's feelings towards Cowper were not altogether friendly. She revered him as a man, but complained that her mother had wasted eighteen hundred pounds of her property upon him,—a complaint which was introduced into the account of Mr. Powley in the Christian Observer. The sacrifices which had been made on Cowper's part seem to have been overlooked.

Cowper and Newton's advice concerning Mr. Powley's Anti-Perfectionism, vol. v. p. 44.—Mr. Powley received the following letter to the same tenour from another of his most esteemed friends.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Hotham, Aug. 29, 1784.

I received both your letter and your three MSS., and according to your desire have looked over them (in part). The remainder shall yet have my inspection, if I can; but I fear to

keep them too long from you, and from better judges. I have given two of them over into the hands of our friend Mr. M., as desired, and doubt not he will read them properly. As to my own part, I am a poor person to employ in such a work, and therefore can give no opinion worth placing any dependance upon. But one thing I would observe, as a *friend to Christian peace, i. e.* that I am against the publication of the two folios altogether. For don't think it any affront to the writer when I say, *Cui bono?* I know good, much good, may be apprehended and intended, but I really entirely doubt that it will follow. Don't think I mean to depreciate its merit; no, 'tis on far other grounds I speak. I acknowledge it shows the great pains and reading of the author, and think it has many just and useful things in it, and, as far as I see, has truth on its side in general; yet I say *Cui bono?* still. If the design is to convince the partisans of the doctrine, this will be *opus inane insumere;* if to prevent wavering minds, few such may ever read it, or receive it as it is designed. In short, I have such a dread of raising the Devil again, that I should be sorry (for one) to see it come out. When I reflect on the years that are past, and the unhappy state of things in the polemical disputes of those days, and the bad consequences which ensued, I dread to see the church's wounds, scarce yet healed, torn open again, and fresh hostilities commenced by the pen of one I love: for such will be the certain effect. Though the work may be well designed, it will provoke an answer, and not only your own spirits will be embittered, but those of thousands filled with the worst of all wrath against one another. Think;—stop in time,—is my advice. As to what my general objection to it is,—it is too long and tedious, and such as will not be an object of sale. Some things bear rather too hard upon Mr. Fletcher, whose excellence all acknowledge, having conclusions from his tenets which affect his person or state too severely, and ranking him with men of very different character. But I would suppose you do not design it; yet will it not be so misunderstood? But it is needless for me to give my judgement, who am against it *ex toto.* Have you forgot what dear Mr. Venn, with the rest of us, said at the beginning of the late war? viz. That it was God's scourge upon us very principally for those divisions and altercations which had rent the church. And has God by

means of those afflictions which he has sent upon us in the late war turned our minds to other things, and caused us to drop these at length, and now when He has indulged us with peace once again, shall we go immediately to the old work? But you will say, Is there not a cause?—I say, it is an *ostensive* one, and such as may serve to promote Satan's end, though you mean no such thing. And in my humble opinion the doctrine will go on just the same, after all you have said, as it did before.

I hope few, very few indeed, abuse it as you seem to apprehend. Consequences may often be drawn from our premises which we never mean, and even abhor. But *my* comfort and confidence is, there is *a God reigns over all.* He will take care of his church, whether as a collective body of professors at large, or as including the real church, those few chosen ones, who are His of every persuasion. *Let* us go on preaching the plain truth in our way according as it appears to us, and let us leave others to Him. Oh may our merciful Lord pardon both their and our blunders, for we are all full of them. I know this is not fashionable in the west; but, Powley, this is my *soul's language.* I have seen an end of all *perfection*, not sinless perfection *only*, but of all; and if I can find a little good amongst a deal of ignorance and mistake, it is as much as I can expect or look for.

Your affectionate friend,
J. STILLINGFLEET.

I could not help laughing at the picture you have drawn of the musical convicts. The subject indeed is aweful, and your manner of representing it is perfectly just; yet I laughed, and must have laughed had I been one of your hearers. To Mr. Newton. Vol. v. p. 62.

The passage to which Cowper alludes is the commencement of Mr. Newton's fourth sermon on the Messiah.

"Whereunto shall we liken the people of this generation, and to what are they like?" Luke vii. 31. I represent to myself a number of persons of various characters, involved in one common charge of high treason. They are already in a state of confinement, but not yet brought to their trial. The facts, however, are so plain, and the evidence against them so strong and pointed, that there is not the least doubt of their guilt

being fully proved, and that nothing but a pardon can preserve them from punishment. In this situation, it should seem their wisdom to avail themselves of every expedient in their power for obtaining mercy. But they are entirely regardless of their danger, and wholly taken up with contriving methods of amusing themselves, that they may pass away the term of their imprisonment with as much cheerfulness as possible. Among other resources they call in the assistance of music; and amidst a great variety of subjects in this way, they are particularly pleased with one. They choose to make the solemnities of their impending trial, the character of their judge, the methods of his procedure, and the aweful sentence to which they are exposed, the ground-work of a musical entertainment; and, as if they were quite unconcerned in the event, their attention is chiefly fixed upon the skill of the composer, in adapting the style of his music to the very solemn language and subject with which they are trifling. The king, however, out of his great clemency and compassion towards those who have no pity for themselves, prevents them with his goodness. Undesired by them, he sends them a gracious message: he assures them that he is unwilling they should suffer; he requires, yea, he entreats them to submit. He points out a way in which their confession and submission shall be certainly accepted; and in this way, which he condescends to prescribe, he offers them a free and a full pardon. But instead of taking a single step towards a compliance with his goodness, they set his message likewise to music; and this, together with a description of their present state, and of the fearful doom awaiting them if they continue obstinate, is sung for their diversion, accompanied with the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of instruments.

Bishop Bagot, vol. v. p. 114.—Giving his reasons to Mr. Unwin for the compliment which he had paid to this prelate in his Tirocinium, Cowper says, "he had been rudely and coarsely treated in the Monthly Review, on account of a sermon which appeared to me, when I read their extract from it, to deserve the highest commendation, as exhibiting explicit proof both of his good sense and his unfeigned piety."

The attack which provoked Cowper's indignation was made

in an article upon the "Discourses on the Prophecies concerning the first Establishment and subsequent History of Christianity," preached at Lincoln's Inn Chapel by Dr. Bagot, at that time dean of Christ Church. The following extracts from that article will justify Cowper's feelings upon the subject, and exemplify the spirit in which the Monthly Review was conducted for more than half a century.

"The design of the fifth discourse is to show, that the deliverance to be wrought by the Messiah was of a spiritual nature; a deliverance from the power and consequences of sin and wickedness. And here the preacher, like a true and faithful son of the church, is a warm advocate for the doctrine of atonement, by a vicarious punishment; but he only repeats what has been often said; and what good purpose can be answered by such repetition we cannot conceive. Such doctrines appear to us to have no foundation in Scripture, and to be utterly repugnant to the principles of common sense. But we must not treat them with too much severity out of tenderness to our grandmothers, as the good old ladies may possibly derive great consolation from them. Perhaps, too, the doctor himself was influenced by some such *pious* motives; if so, his *piety* will, no doubt, be properly rewarded.

"The doctor tell us, that our established church maintains, in its creeds and articles, those very doctrines which have been held forth by the mouth of the prophets since the world began, as the essential doctrines of that faith by which all men should be saved. We should be cautious, he says, of admitting any alterations in an establishment which has for ages secured the TRUTH to us, amidst the repeated and violent attacks of enemies of different complexions and different denominations. He further observes, that we have of late been loudly called upon; that the principles of the Reformation are pleaded in behalf of farther changes; and that the moderation of some among us would lead them to attempt to silence clamour, by making concessions in points of indifference. But it should be remembered, we are told, that points actually indifferent are never the objects of clamour; whatever its pretensions may be, it always really means something more. Indeed it hath now spoken out, the doctor says; and it is become evident, that the principles on which the Reformation formerly proceeded, plead now with

equal force against the alterations contended for. The great truths of the Gospel were the objects then, and are so now. Moderation, pretended with respect to these, should be called by another name.

"Such is the spirit that breathes through this performance. We have heard of clergymen who were fierce *for* moderation; but Dr. Bagot is fierce, very fierce indeed *against* it. It may be proper, however, to acquaint him, that some of the brightest ornaments of the church, in the highest stations too, for whose learning, abilities, and virtues, our author professes the greatest regard, make no scruple of declaring that both our articles and liturgy stand much in need of reformation. Dr. Bagot may call the *moderation* of such persons by whatever name he pleases; in our opinion it does them great honour. We have an extensive acquaintance among the clergy, and have the satisfaction to know that almost all of them, how much soever they may differ in other matters, agree in this,—that a reformation is earnestly to be wished for. There are no doubt several reasons which may be assigned for that indifference to religion, so visible to every eye, and for the wide spread of infidelity; but he must be little acquainted with the spirit of the present times who does not see that both the one and the other are, in some considerable degree, owing to the gross absurdity and unintelligible jargon of some of those articles of our church, to which an unfeigned assent is required by all those who minister in it. As men generally take their notions of Christianity, not from the scriptures, but from creeds, formularies, and confessions of faith, if the doctrines contained in our articles, taken in their plain and obvious sense, are the genuine doctrines of Christianity, is it to be wondered at that the number of unbelievers is so great?"—Vol. lxiv. pp. 414—416.

"The brothers," says Cowper of the Bagots, "were all five my schoolfellows, and very amiable and valuable boys they were." Lewis Bagot was elected from Westminster to Christ Church in 1764; was made canon of Christ Church in the room of Dr. Moore, archbishop of Canterbury, and dean on the installation of Dr. Markham to the see of York. In 1782 he became bishop of Bristol, was translated to Norwich the year following, and to St. Asaph in 1790. There he rebuilt the palace, on a plan suited to the situation, 'where among the mountains,

and in the vicinity of the sea, storms are often violent.' It is a low building on the slope of a hill; the vestibule, dining-room, and drawing room, which occupy the whole front, are on a level with the first floor in the other apartments." He died in 1802.

A correspondent of Mr. Nichols says, in an account of this excellent prelate, "Similitude of character is sometimes the result of original impressions, and sometimes the effect of studious imitation. It was perhaps owing to both these causes that Bishop Bagot, in the mildness of his manners and placid benevolence, was reckoned strongly to resemble his most esteemed friend the late Dr. Townson, rector of Malpas and archdeacon of Richmond. When the latter was rector of Blithfield, the other, then a mere boy, would often steal down to the parsonage, and read there with his friend for hours together, with avidity and attention worthy of riper years. The friendship between them, which commenced thus early, terminated only in the grave. The deceased prelate wrote a most beautiful hand, which seems to be a family excellence; as the late Lord Bagot wrote a very fair hand, like the bishop's, and like his brother's, the present rector[6] of Blithfield, and all of them reminded one of the strokes of *his* hand, now motionless in death, who was once their venerable pastor, and always their intimate and dear friend.

"As a patron, the late Bishop of St. Asaph is commended for bestowing the ample patronage of his see with great disinterestedness and impartiality, not upon aliens, whether relatives or others, but among the learned and meritorious clergy of the diocese, acquainted with the language and manners of the district."—*Nichols's Literary Anecdotes*, vol. v. pp. 630–1.

"My father," says Miss Seward, "used to say (of Lord Bagot) he was the most classically learned nobleman he knew; and he has much engaging benevolence in his countenance and manners; but exteriorly more broken and infirm than belongs to his time of life,—to autumnal years, on the verge of winter. The sobriety of his youth gave him a prospect of age that should prove like a lusty winter, 'frosty, but kindly.' I fear it may not be. Many and severe have been his filial losses, and grief

[6] Cowper's correspondent.

rivals the debilitating pleasures in its power of antedating decline."—*Letters*, vol. iv. p. 384 (1797).

Letters of Literature, vol. v. p. 169.—This book which provoked Cowper's astonishment and indignation was written by Pinkerton, though it was said in the title-page to be by Robert Heron, Esq. He assumed the name of Heron because it was his mother's. An unfavourable opinion was formed of the author, from the spirit in which the book was written, and the opinions which were implied in it; and an unfortunate Robert Heron, who began his literary career about the same time, and whose sad story has been recorded by Mr. D'Israeli as an example of "the Calamities of Authors[7]," is said to have suffered by the prejudice which had been thus excited against his name.

Horace Walpole expressed a very flattering opinion of this book to the author. He says, "I scarce ceased from reading till I had finished it; so admirable I found it, and so full of good sense, brightly delivered. Nay, I am pleased with myself too, for having formed the same opinions with you on several points, in which we do not agree with the generality of men. On some topics, I confess frankly, I do not concur with you; considering how many you have touched, it would be wonderful if we agreed on all, or I should not be sincere if I said I did. There are others on which I have formed no opinion; for I should give myself an impertinent air, with no truth, if I pretended to have any knowledge of many subjects, of which, young as you are, you seem to have made yourself master. Indeed, I have gone deeply into nothing, and therefore shall not discuss those heads on which we differ most; as probably I should not defend my own opinions well. I assure you I could write a letter ten times as long, if I were to specify all I like in your work. I

7 Vol. i. pp. 218—25. The reader may find there "the Case of a Man of Letters, of regular education, living by honest literary industry:"—a statement drawn up by Heron himself, when, having suffered for ten months "the very extremity of bodily and pecuniary distress," he was under arrest for debt. It concludes with the words, "I shudder at the thought of perishing in a gaol." About three months afterwards he died in Newgate,—the victim not of his own vices, nor of his follies, but of his devotion to a profession, in which even considerable attainments like his, and severer industry than the hardest taskmaster requires from his slaves, could not preserve him from utter destitution.

more than like most of it, and I am charmed with your glorious love of liberty, and your other humane and noble sentiments[8]."

George Hardinge, also, is said to have been an admirer of these Letters of Literature. They bore marks of considerable reading, and of greater pretensions;—of much ability, and of more presumptuousness. The author considered Pindar as "extravagance itself," and said that Dryden's Ode was worth all Pindar's, "as a large diamond is worth a vast heap of gold." Upon Petrarch he says, "the stated form and measure of the sonnet is so disgustingly similar, that I believe no man of genius would now write twenty in a life time." He speaks with contempt of Cardinal de Retz's Memoirs; says that Moliere, in attempting to introduce laughter into the French comedy, blundered upon mere farce; praises Jean Baptiste Rousseau as one of those writers without whom the French would have no poetry; suspects that the fame of Thomson's Seasons would not last long; and censures Goldsmith's two comedies, as being "composed of low humour and dullness and absurdity, more dull and absurd than English sentimental comedy itself." "Style," he said, "had preserved Herodotus in spite of his absurdities; and style had saved Virgil entirely, who has not the most distant pretence to any other attribute of a poet. Indeed," said he, "I never look into Virgil but with utter disgust." Yet he was sometimes right in his critical opinions: he praised the Castle of Indolence; he vindicated Tasso against Boileau and Addison; he always found fresh delight in reading Homer. The better parts of the book, indeed, deserved the praise which Horace Walpole bestowed upon it.

The passage which most offended Cowper (and most justly) was that in which Pinkerton involved the scriptural poetry in the condemnation which he passed upon eastern writings in general. "In all ages," he says, "the poetry of the Asiatics has been strained to bombast, and glittering with all the beauties of absurdity, from the most ancient epoch down to our own times." One who is unacquainted with the Oriental languages may be inclined to agree in this opinion, judging by what has been translated, but there are large allowances to be made; and nothing is more remarkable than the difference between the

[8] Pemberton's Correspondence, vol. i. p. 67—9.

Hebrew and all other Oriental poetry,—the Canticles alone excepted. Pinkerton, however, attacked those writers who, "in their fondness of enthusiasm," he said, "would fain find holy writ as eminent in composition as in sanctity. When they attempt to debauch our taste by commenting on the beautiful and grand passages of scripture, they are forced to relinquish every rule of sound sense." "But I am afraid of being tedious on a subject so clear, and shall return in observing, that for absurd and filthy imagery, (witness some parts of Ezekiel, the best of the sacred writers,) the scripture yields to no composition in any language; but of sublime or beautiful style, I can from that work produce no proofs. Writers who hold it up in that ludicrous view, do as great harm to religion as to good taste: it resembles the dressing of a pious and worthy clergyman in the garments of a hero, or of a lovely woman; and then telling us he hath the sublimity of the one and the beauty of the other, whereas it only puts him in an awkward light, and brings derision and contempt upon his holy character."

The most remarkable part of Pinkerton's book is his scheme for improving and fixing the English language,—a scheme which will always secure for these Letters a place among the Curiosities of Literature. The plan was, "that the king should incorporate one hundred, or indeed all, of the most learned men in the kingdom, or they should associate themselves, under the name of The Academy for Improving the Language. The great intent should be to soften and tune the English speech as much as possible: new modes of spelling, and new uses of vowels ought to be adopted. The Academy should publish a grammar and dictionary, in which the new orthography should be used; and all the members, and indeed all the *literati* in the kingdom, should unite to assert their proper power over the mob.—And perhaps a thousand years hence, when the British power may be no more, the language would survive; an event, which it may be feared, cannot be effected even by Milton and Shakespeare, if the speech remain in its present rude state. The sole intention should be to improve our orthography, and give us a number of vowel terminations. The *é* should in particular be always pronounced as in *the*. I look upon Greek as the most perfect language, both for strength and melody, that ever was known: now in Greek, I have found that the vowel terminations

of words, taken as they run in any book, are equal to one third of the language. In English they amount but to one fourth: it follows that we want vowel terminations for about eight thousand words. How are they to be supplied?

"Suppose *a* for all plurals instead of *s*,—*pena* for *pens*, *papera* for *papers*, &c. *O* is a fine close, and very rare in our language. Suppose it given to all substantives ending in harsh consonants, as in *b*, *crabo*, *stabo*, *webo*; in *c*, *publico*; in *d*, *commando*; in *g*, *flago*, *eggo*; in *m*, *epigramo*; in *p*, *carpo*; in *t*, *anto*, *facto*. The *ch* is shocking and *ch*ocking, and throwing out the *h* is entitled to *o* even in adjectives, as *leeco* for *leech*, *rico* for *rich*. The *ck* is horrid, and must omit the *k* in every instance, and take the *o* in all adjectives and substantives, as *quaco*, *saco*." Passing over other rules of alteration, it will suffice to exhibit part of a well known paper in the Spectator, as translated by the improver himself into the improved language.

"When I waz ato Grand Cairo, I picked up several orientala manuscripta, whica I havé still by me. Among othera, I met with oné entitulen Thea Visiona of Mirza, whica I havé redd ové with great pleasuré. I intend to givé ito to the publico, when I havé no other entertainmento fo them; ando shall begin with the first vision, whico I havé translaten wordo fo wordo az followeth.

"On the fifth day of the moon whico, according to the customo of mya foréfathera, I alway keep holi, aftero having washen myself, ando offeren up mya morninga devotiona, I ascended thea hia hilla of Bagdat, in ordero to pas the resta of the day in meditation ando prayero. Az I waz heré airing myself on thea topa of thea mountaina, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanité of human lifé; ando passing fro oné thôté to anothero, Surely, said I, man is buto a shadow, ando lifé a dreamo. Whilé I waz thuso musing, I cast mina eyea towardo the summito of a roco, tha waz noto faro fro me, wheré I discovered oné in the habito of a shepherdo, with a letel musical instrumento in his hando. Az I looked upo him, he applied ito to hiza lipa, ando began to play upo ito. The soundo of ito waz exceeding sweet, ando wrôte into a varieté of tuna tha weré inexpressibly melodiouza, ando alto differenta fro any thing I had evé heard. They put me in mindo of thosé heavenlea aira tha aré playen to thea departen soula of good

men, upo their first arrival in Paradisé, to wear out thea impressiona of theira lasta agonea, ando qualifie them fo thea pleasura of tha happi placé. My hearto melted away in secreta rapturea."

The Pseudo-Robert Heron received the grateful acknowledgement of one correspondent, who had often " regretted that our nervous language should be so crowded and set a-jar with harsh superfluous consonants, but never hoped to see a scheme advanced to the public effectually to refine and harmonise our northern tongue, by substituting throughout for those grating and hissing finals, melodious vowel terminations. Every person," he said, " who hath an ear in the least attuned to harmony, and hath mastered habitude and prejudice, must be delighted with the improvement illustrated in the subjoined specimen." But he suggested some alterations in the plan, and thought that a *kinda mothera* would be more elegant than a *kindo mothero*, and that the plural might be somewhat diversified, as *kindi fatheri, kindai motherai, honesta shepherda and sheperdeza, honestai shepherdai and shepherdezai.* The old proverb, however, was not verified in this instance, and Pinkerton appears to have made no other convert than this Cornish clergyman.

Horace Walpole had respect enough for Pinkerton's abilities and acquirements to reason with him seriously upon so preposterous a scheme. " To change *s* for *a*," said he, " in the plural number of our substantives and adjectives would be so violent an alteration, that I believe neither the power of Power, nor the power of Genius, would be able to effect it. In most cases I am convinced that very strong innovations are more likely to make impression than small and almost imperceptible differences, as in religion, medicine, politics, &c.; but I do not think that language can be treated in the same manner, especially in a refined age. When a nation first emerges from barbarism, two or three masterly writers may operate wonders; and the fewer the number of writers, as the number is small at such a period, the more absolute is their authority. But when a country has been polishing itself for two or three centuries, and when consequently authors are innumerable, the most supereminent genius (or whoever is esteemed so, though without foundation,) possesses very limited empire, and is far from meeting implicit obedience. Every petty writer will contest very novel institutions; every

inch of change in any language will be disputed; and the language will remain as it were longer than the tribunal which should dictate very heterogeneous alterations. With regard to adding *a* or *o* to final consonants, consider, sir, should the usage be adopted, what havoc would it make! All our poetry would be defective in metre, or would become at once as obsolete as Chaucer; and could we promise ourselves that, though we should acquire better harmony, and more rhymes, we should have a new crop of poets, to replace Milton, Dryden, Gray, and —I am sorry you will not allow me to add—Pope? You might enjoin our prose to be reformed, as you have done by the Spectator; but try Dryden's Ode by your new institution[9]."

These remarks, thus kindly and indeed condescendingly offered by one whose place in literature and in public opinion entitled him to respect, had probably their due weight. But follies of this kind are soon outgrown. Pinkerton became a considerable person in his day, and, notwithstanding all his faults, rendered some service to the history and the literature of his country.

Odour of the soil, vol. v. p. 192.—On this subject I have met with a curious passage in the Conde de Mora's *Historia de la Imperial Ciudad de Toledo.*

"*A una legua deste lugar (de Malamoneda) ay un valle, que le llaman Oledor, ò Oledero, por lo mucho que reconocen oler bien los que passan por el en qualquier tiempo del año; y queriendo reconocer este olor, se passa muy aprisa. Y para satisfacerse de que olor sea, un religioso de el convento de la Sisla de Toledo, de la orden de San Geronimo, quemo todos aquellos berrezales de aquel valle, juzgando fuesse alguna yerva; y despues de quemado, dava el mismo olor; y assi se juzga quo no puede ser sino algun cuerpo Santo, que Dios tiene alli guardado, que desde la perdida de España està alli escondido, y no se ha dudo con el lugar donde està; y su Divina Magestad le descubrirá quando le pareciere mas conveniente.*"—1 parti, l. iii. p. 245.

"A league from Malamoneda, is a valley which they call Oledor, or Oledero, (the redolent,) because of the fragrance perceived there by those who pass through it at any season of the

9 Pinkerton's Correspondence, p. 68—9.

year, and which, when they seek to ascertain from what it proceeds, passes presently away. A monk from the convent of la Sisla de Toledo, of the order of St. Jerome, burnt all the herbage of this valley, thinking it was some plant that occasioned it; but it emitted the same fragrance after the burning, and so it is deemed that it must be some saint's body which God has kept there, and which has been concealed there from the time of the destruction of Spain, the spot not having yet been found; his Divine Majesty will discover it when it may seem to him most convenient."

This is plainly a physical fact, like that which Cowper notices. The note of preparation was given in a different manner when a mine of relics was to be sprung.

Among the rules which Tansillo gives for purchasing land, he recommends filling a sack or basket with the mould, pouring water on it, and tasting the infusion. If it be sweet, the land is good, but if bitter or salt, the farmer will beware of it.

Per prova del sapor, vil sacco o cesta
S'empia di terra, e là dove più avversa
Ella vi pare, ed al fruttar men presta;
E d'acqua dolce ben da su cospersa,
Premasi il cesto o il sacco, onde trapela
L'umor che fuora a larghe goccie versa:
Indi purgato da stamigna o tela,
In un vaso, qual vin, fatene il saggio;
E il sapor de la terra ei vi revela.
S'egli ha del dolce, può comprarla uom saggio;
S'è amaro o salso, al suo signor potrete
Dir, 'frate, addio! che sete più non aggio;
Che estinta m'ha questo licor la sete
Del poder vostro che m'avea sì acceso,
Qual fontana d'Ardenna, o rio di Lete.

Tansillo, Il Podere, cap. ii.

He indeed (Horace) *recommends nine years imprisonment of your verses before you send them abroad; but the ninth part of that time is, I believe, as much as there is need of to open a man's eyes upon his own defects, and to secure him from the danger of premature self-approbation*, vol. v. p. 319.—This is the subject of one

of John Byrom's critical disquisitions in rhyme. The poems of this ingenious and singular good man are properly included in Chalmers's General Collection; *properly*, because they have the great and rare merit of originality. Some specimens of this piece may perhaps induce the reader to look into his works.

Among other rules which your Horace has writ,
To make his young Piso for poetry fit,
He tells him that verses should not be pursued
When the Muse or Minerva was not in the mood;
That whate'er he should write, he should let it descend
To the ears of his father, his master, his friend;
And let it lie by him,—(now prick up your ears!)
Nonumque primatur in annum,—nine years.

Nine years! I repeat; for the sound is enough,
With the help of plain sense, to discover the stuff.
If the rule had been true, what a figure would nine
Have made with your Piso's, ye masters of mine!
Must a youth of quick parts, for his verse's perfection,
Let it lie for nine years in the house of correction?
Nine years if his verses must lie in the leaven,
Take the young rogue himself, and transport him for seven.

To make this a maxim that Horace infuses,
Must provoke all the laughter of all the nine Muses.
How the wits of old Rome, in a case so facetious,
Would have joked upon Horace and Piso and Metius,
If they all could not make a poetical line
Ripe enough to be read, till the year had struck nine!
Had the boy been possessed of nine lives, like a cat,
Yet surely he'd ne'er have submitted to that.

* * * * *

Indeed, says a young one, nine years, I confess,
Is a desperate while for a youth to suppress.
I can hardly think Horace would make it a point;
The word, to be sure, must be out of its joint.

* * *

Had he said for nine months, I should think them enew;
This reading is false, sir,—pray tell us the true.

" Why, you are not far off it, if present conjecture
May furnish the place with a probable lecture;
For by copies, I doubt, either printed or written,
The hundred of editors all have been bitten.
Nine months you allow?—yes. Well, let us, for fear
Of affronting Quintilian, e'en make it a year.
Give the critics their *numque;* but as to their *no*—
You have one in plain English more fit to bestow.

I take the correction,—*unumque prematur,*
Let it lie for one twelvemonth:—ay, that may hold water.

* * * * *

They may wrangle and jangle, unwilling to see,
But the thing is as clear as a whistle to me.
This *nonum* of theirs no defence will admit,
Except,—that a blot is no blot, till it's hit:
And now you have hit it, if *nonums* content 'em,
So would, if the verse had so had it, *nongentum.*

* * * * *

Then blot out this blunder, how here it is hinted,
And by all future printers *unumque* be printed.

The best edition of Byrom's Poems, with a life of the author, and a most characteristic portrait, was published in 1814, by Mr. James Nichols, the translator of Arminius, and author of "Calvinism and Arminianism compared," a work of extraordinary research, which throws great light on the religious, and consequently the political, history of England during the reigns of James and Charles I.

The swan is called argutus, *I suppose,* a non arguendo, *and* canorus a non canendo, vol. v. p. 321.—"The Chevalier de Jaucourt tells us seriously, that the swan, whose sweet song is so celebrated by the poets, does not produce the sounds by his voice, which is very course and disagreeable; but by his wings, which being raised and extended when he sings, are played upon by the wind, like the Æolian harp, which produce a sound so much the more agreeable, as it is not monotonous, which is the case in the warble of most other birds; but on the contrary, this

sound is continually changing, being composed of many different tones, which form a kind of harmony, in proportion as the wind happens to fall on different parts of the wings, and in different positions[10]." "But who," says Dr. Burney, "ever heard this harmony? and why was it more remarkable in the *dying swans* of antiquity, than in those of youth and vigour[11]?"

The wild swan utters a sound which is described as a sort of whistling.

Mrs. King, vol. vi. p. 122.—Cowper's correspondent, Mrs. Margaret King, was daughter of the Rev. Hans Deveil and Margaretta Lydiat his wife. She was born in 1735, married to the Rev. John King in 1752, and died in 1795. The following memorandum exists in a MS. Autobiographical Diary of the late Professor Martyn. "Feb. 6, 1793. In the evening died my excellent friend, the eminently pious Margaret, above forty years wife to my cousin the Rev. John King, having supported a long and painful sickness with exemplary patience and resignation, in the fifty-eighth year of her age." She was interred within the chancel of Pertenhall church.

The Rev. John King was eldest son of John King (the well known editor of Euripides) by Lucy, daughter of Thomas Morice, Esq. He was born about 1724, and was contemporary with Cowper at Westminster school. He was entered of Bene't (now called Corpus) College, Cambridge, in 1741, graduated B. A. in 1745, and M. A. in 1749. His connection with Bene't, of which John Cowper was fellow, probably accounts for Mrs. King's being in possession of John Cowper's MS. poems in his own hand writing. *That* copy appears to have been the only one in existence in 1788, for Cowper then expresses his delight in seeing it, his own copy having perished in the Temple. Though Cowper promised to return it, it does not appear among Mrs. King's papers, as they have descended to the Rev. John King Martyn. It is not improbable that Cowper was requested to consider the MS. as his own. In 1752 (in which year he married) Mr. King was instituted to the rectory of Pertenhall, Bedfordshire; that benefice he resigned in 1800, but continued to reside in the rectory with his cousin and successor in the living, Professor Martyn,

[10] *Encyc.* Art. *Voix.* [11] Burney's Hist. of Music, vol. i. p. 191.

till his death, Oct. 6, 1812. He was buried in the chancel at Pertenhall, under the communion table.—G. C. G.

Some account of Mr. King's grandfather, Dr. John King, rector of Chelsea, and of his writings, may be found in Mr. Gorham's Life of Professors John and Thomas Martyn, pp. 48–50.

The slave trade recommended as a subject to Cowper, vol. vi. p. 127.—When George Hardinge urged Miss Seward to write some verses upon this subject, she excused herself, but at the same time told him how she would have treated it, had she been disposed to undertake the task. "If," said she, "I had leisure for the Muses, which I have not,—if I had spirits, which I have not, to encounter the solicitudes of publication,—and if I thought, which I do not, that poetry could have any influence upon our senators, to induce them to espouse the cause of liberty and mercy, in behalf of the negroes, I would demand if Africa has no benevolent genius?—if her nymphs and her river-gods are all besmeared with blood? I would make the naiads of Niger and Gambia complain of the human gore which pollutes their waves. I would try if I could not rummage out some black Muses, some sooty Graces, to sit upon the topmost stone of an high African mountain, listening to the groans of a thousand nations. I would make an execration from a sable river-god to a ship loaded with slaves, crammed together in its hold, whose groans and cries should, at intervals, like the sound of the death-bell in Mason's beautiful Elegy on Lady Coventry, interrupt the execration, or be a kind of returning chorus to it.

"That execration should be something like the Roman augur's to the legions of Crassus. I would call upon the Genius of England to remember what lustre the improved humanity of building hospitals, &c. has cast around his civic crown, and conjure him, by casting away the galling, and hitherto indissoluble chain, from the naked savage, toiling for him beneath torrid suns, to open a prospect of golden days to come,

> 'When the swart negroes, 'mid their palmy groves,
> Might quaff the citron juice, and woo their sable loves.'

"Were I to write a poem on this popular subject, it would be on somewhat of the above plan; but the want of time, spirits, and faith, are in the opposite scale, and my sooty Muses and Graces

kick the beam. How should the solemn mourners march through the gates of my versifying region, since neither leisure, vivacity or hope, are at hand to open them?

"Adieu!—may you never experience the absence of those gentlewomen-ushers to wit-making, verse-making, or love-making!" —*Letters*, vol. ii. p. 111—13.

Cowper's ideal description of Mrs. King, vol. vi. 186.—"Mrs. King in her reply would not allow that the poet was correct in this conjectural portrait: it appears however that his sketch was not far from the truth." Your queries about Mrs. King, (observes a surviving relative) have awakened my recollections of tales of other times,—so long gone by, that I fear I shall not be able to give you a very satisfactory account. There is a portrait in oil of her at Pertenhall parsonage, which represents her as a pretty-rosy-faced girl. When I knew her about the year 1788, she was certainly very much *en bon point*,—a comely dame to look at; with a full open countenance, of a benevolent cheerful expression, very fair, and retaining the traces of youthful beauty; nor had the rose entirely forsaken her face. Being then a Westminster school-boy, I used to spend the summer holidays with Mr. and Mrs. King at Pertenhall parsonage. As she was my godmother, she was accustomed to hear me repeat the catechism, and give me ghostly counsel, which was sweetened and impressed by a liberal store of plum-cake, and other good things with which her closet abounded."—*Letter from the Rev. John King Martyn, to the Rev. G. C. Gorham. Nov.* 13, 1835.

I rejoice that a cousin of yours found my volumes agreeable to him, for being your cousin, I will be answerable for his good taste and judgement, vol. vi. p. 187.—This cousin was the Reverend Professor Martyn, then resident at Park Prospect, Queen Street, Westminster. Thomas Martyn, B. D. Regius Professor of Botany at Cambridge, was born at Chelsea in 1738, graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 1756; elected fellow of Sidney in 1758, and tutor in 1760, and succeeded his father in the occupation of the botanical chair in 1762. He was instituted to the sequestration of Foxton, Cambridgeshire, in 1773; to the rectory of Ludgershall, Bucks, in 1774; to the vicarage of Little Marton, Bucks, in 1776; to the donative of Edgeware in

1788, and to the Rectory of Pertenhall in 1804, where he died on the 3rd of June, 1825, having nearly completed his ninetieth year. He was interred in Pertenhall church, where a marble tablet records his virtues. An excellent portrait of him, drawn in chalk by Russel in 1799, is in the possession of the Rev. John King Martyn, of Pertenhall; which was engraved by Vendramini, elegantly encircled with a wreath of the *Martynia proboscidea*. He had the honour, in 1763, of introducing the Linnæan system of botany to the University of Cambridge, in the *first* course of lectures ever read in England, founded upon the method of the Swedish naturalist. His Life and Correspondence have been published in "Memoirs of John Martyn, F. R. S., and of Thomas Martyn, B. D. F. R. S. F. L. S., Professor of Botany in the University of Cambridge for one hundred and seven years, by G. C. Gorham, B. D., late Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge.

Though I am neither a relation, nor quite eighty-six years of age, &c. vol. vi. p. 194.—This passage alludes to Mrs. Lætitia Battison, who was born in 1702, resided at Bedford when this letter was written, and died a widow in 1788. She was descended in the maternal line, and fifth in descent from Sir Francis Knollys, first cousin to Queen Elizabeth, and treasurer of her household. There is a fine portrait in oil of Sir Francis, in Pertenhall rectory;—his splendid monument, as is well known, is at Rotherfield Grey's, near Henley. Mrs. Battison was related to Mr. King through the marriage of her aunt Anne, youngest daughter of William Durham, about 1680, with Dr. King, rector of Chelsea. G. C. G.

Three landscapes which a lady thought worthy to be framed and glazed, vol. vi. p. 196.—"Except these," says Cowper, "there is nothing remaining to show that I ever aspired to such an accomplishment."

An engraving from one of these drawings may be seen in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1804. The gentleman who communicated it, says, "I am happy to inform Mr. Urban that the three drawings above alluded to, do still exist; my late valued friend Lady Austen, did me the favour to present me with one of them in the month of June, 1802, just before she went to

France, where she died, August 12, 1802, and after her decease, Baron Tardiff was so obliging to send me the other two from Paris."

The letter is signed J. A. Knight, and dated from Gloucester Street, Hoxton. The composition looks as if it were copied from a print in some old drawing-book.

Cowper's articles in the Analytical Review, vol. vi. p. 216.—As a reviewer, Cowper adhered strictly to the principle by which the Analytical Review was to be distinguished from its competitors. He commenced his account of the Athenaid with the brief advertisement which Glover's daughter (Mrs. Halsay) prefixed to this posthumous and unrevised work of her father. Then he proceeded thus:—

"The admirers of Leonidas will not judge that the author of that poem has forfeited any part of his just praise, by the production of the Athenaid. Whosoever shall take a cursory view of the following analysis of it, will at once perceive that it abounds with incidents, and that the characters are frequently thrown into situations such as must of necessity interest the reader. That of Themistocles, the hero of the piece, is in particular, well sustained. He serves his country with a constant view indeed to the advancement of his own glory, but still he serves his country; and actuated on all occasions by a selfish motive, but pursuing his purpose by liberal means, affords an instance of heroic virtue so qualified by human infirmity, as neither to shock our belief, nor leave us uninstructed; the fault of most heroes who have figured in the garb of poetry.

"It might perhaps be wished that the poet had indulged himself less in episode, and had given us fewer loves and marriages. Had his attention been more pointedly directed to the great event which furnished him with his main subject, the deliverance of Greece from the power of the Persians, his poem would have gained in importance what it lost in bulk, with this additional advantage that being much abridged, it might not, possibly, have been left unfinished. Such as it is, it is in danger of being hastily thrown aside after a partial perusal of it, by many who would find themselves not ill recompensed had they patience to read it through. There are in it many strokes of genius, and many passages so well written that they were

hardly susceptible of much improvement. In short with all its defects, which are, for the most part, such as the author would probably have himself amended had he lived to revise it, we may venture to pronounce it the work of a man of considerable poetical merit, and of much classical information.

"That we may not seem to make these assertions hastily, or without just warrant, we shall subjoin two or three extracts which will, in our opinion sufficiently justify them. The following description of the temple of Neptune, and of its situation in the island of Trezenæ is picturesque and pleasing.

'The heroes land, where opening to their sight
An elevation of the ground, attired
In flower-enamell'd turf, display'd the fane
Of structure vast in marble: brass the gates
Refulgence cast; a peristyle sustain'd
The massy roof; huge columns on their heads
The crisped foliage of acanthus bore,
And high o'erlook'd the impenetrable shade
Which screen'd the island round. Perennial springs
Supplied melodious currents through the woods,
In artificial beds of pearly conchs
Along the sea-beat margin cull'd by nymphs,
The temple's chaste attendants. Unrestrain'd
Here flow'd the native waters; there confined
By marble fountains win the enchanted eye
To shady-skirted lawns, to opening glades,
Or canopies of verdure: all the founts
Were graced by guardian images of gods,
The train of Neptune.'

"There is much poetical fancy exhibited in the poet's account of the dream with which Mardonius was visited in a cave, where he passed the night in his way to join Xerxes at Athens.

'To superstition prone from early age
Was Gobryas' son; o'erheated now by toil,
Yet more by thirst unsated of renown,
His soul partakes not with her wearied clay
In sleep repose; the cavern to her view
Appears in vast dimension to enlarge,
The sides retire, the ascending roof expands,

All changed to crystal, where pellucid walls
Expose to sight the universe around.
Thus did a dream invade the mighty breast
Of that long matchless conqueror, who gave
Italia's clime a spoil to Punic Mars,
When on the margin of Iberus lay
The slumbering chief, and eagerly to birth
The vast conception of his pregnant mind
Was struggling. Now Mardonius to himself
Seems roving o'er the metamorphosed cave;
Orbicular above an opening broad
Admits a flood of light, and gentlest breath
Of odoriferous winds; amid the blaze
Full on the centre of a pavement, spread
Beyond whate'er portentous Egypt saw
In Thebes or Memphis, Fame, presiding there,
Gigantic shape, and amethyst entire,
Sits on a throne of adamant. On strength
Of pillars, each a topaz, bears the dome;
The silver pavement's intervening space
Between the circling colonnade and wall
With pedestals of diamond is filled;
The crystal circuit is comparted all
In niches verged with rubies. From that scene
The gloom of night for ever to expel,
Imagination's wanton skill in chains
Of pearl throughout the visionary hall
Suspends carbuncles, gems of native light,
Emitting splendour, such as tales portray,
Where Fancy, winning sorceress, deludes
The enchanted mind, rejecting reason's clue,
To wander wild through fiction's pleasing maze.
The oriental hero in his dream
Feels wonder waking; at his presence life
Pervades the statue; Fame, slow-rising, sounds
Her trumpet loud; a hundred golden gates
Spontaneous fly abroad; the shapes divine,
In every age, in every climate spring,
Of all the worthies since recorded time,
Ascend the lucid hall. Again she sounds

A measure sweeter than the Dorian flute
Of Pan, or lyre of Phœbus; each assumes
His place allotted, there transformed is fix'd
An adamantine statue; yet unfill'd
One niche remains. To Asia's gazing chief
The goddess then: "That vacancy for thee,
Illustrious son of Gobryas I reserve."'

"The cavern sacred to the Furies, in which the seven Geræstian conspirators are sworn by Lamachus to the assassination of Themistocles, affords an instance of no inconsiderable powers of invention and description.

'There was a cavern in the bowels deep
Of naked rock by Oreus, where the stern
Eumenides possessed a dusky shrine,
And frown'd in direful idols from the time
That Titan's offspring o'er Eubœa reign'd,
The enemies of Jove. Around it slept
A stagnant water, over-arch'd by yews,
Growth immemorial, which forbade the winds
E'er to disturb the melancholy pool.
To this, the fabled residence abhorr'd
Of hell-sprung beings, Demonax himself
Predominating dæmon of the place,
Conducts the seven assassins. There no priest
Officiates; single there, as Charon grim,
A boatman wafts them to the cavern's mouth.
They enter fenced in armour; down the black
Descent, o'er moist and lubricated stone,
They tread unstable. Night's impurest birds
With noisome wings each loathing visage beat;
Of each the shuddering flesh through plated steel
By shiny efts, and clinking snakes is chill'd;
Cold creeping toads beset the' infected way.
Now at the cave's extremity obscene
They reach the sisters three, tremendous forms,
Of huge, misshapen size. Alecto there,
Tisiphone, Megæra, on their fronts
Display their scorpion curls; within their grasp
Their serpents writhed. Before them sulph'rous fires

In vases broad, antiquity's rude toil,
To render horror visible, diffused
Such light as hell affords. Beside a chasm,
Whose bottom blind credulity confined
By Tartarus alone, with trembling feet
Stood Lamachus, the wicked and deform'd.
An ewe, in dye like ebony, he gored;
The dark abyss received a purple stream.
Next to the dire conspirators he held
A vessel; o'er the brim their naked arms
They stretch'd; he pierced the veins; the envenom'd blood,
A fit libation mix'd for hell, he pour'd
Down the deep clift; then faltering, half dismay'd
At his own rites, began: "Ye injured men,
Of wealth and honours violently spoil'd,
Implacably condemn'd to bonds and rods
By insolent Themistocles, before
These dreadful goddesses, ye swear; his death
You vow by every means revenge can prompt,
In secret ambush, or in open fight,
By day, by night, with poison, sword, or fire;
Else on your heads you imprecate the wrath
Of these inexorable powers."—They swore.'

"It is needless to add more; the reader of this article has now tasted for himself."

This was followed by six and twenty pages of analysis, or arguments of the thirty books, presenting a complete skeleton, but dry as a skeleton, and therefore, notwithstanding the just commendation which had been previously bestowed, more likely to deter the reader than invite him to a perusal of the poem. The reviewal appeared in ten numbers, the first part signed G. G., alluding possibly to a *sobriquet*[12], by which he seems to have been known in his family circle; or perhaps the initials may have been misprinted for P. P., with which the second part is signed, and the two other papers in this Journal which Cowper supplied.

The first of these is upon the Conquest of Canaan, a poem, in eleven books; printed at Hartford, in New England, 1785, and reprinted in London, for J. Johnson, in 1788.

[12] Vol. vi. p. 47.

"This poem is inscribed by its author, Mr. Timothy Dwight, to General Washington. We do not expect from a poet the fidelity of an historian: wherever he finds his subject, he claims a right to shape it to his purpose; may lead his reader to the catastrophe, by such ways as please him most; may bring his characters into action, and slay them at his own time; or may employ such as never existed. Poetry cannot be without fancy, and fancy can content herself with no materials as she finds them.

"The poet before us, availing himself of this privilege, has modelled the sacred narrative to his mind, and in such manner that he who would learn by what steps the Israelites became possessed of the promised land, must still seek his information in the Bible. He fights all his battles under the walls of Ai, and opposes Jabin king of Hazor to Joshua, throughout the poem. The friendly disposition of the Gibeonites he ascribes not to its true cause, the terror with which the miracles wrought in favour of Israel had inspired them, but to their previous conversion by Mina, a virgin of Edom, herself instructed in the camp of Israel.

"It is to be regretted, perhaps, that, for the sake of simplifying his plan he has excluded from it the story of Rahab and the spies, and consequently of the fall of Jericho; incidents which had a great influence on all that followed, beautiful in themselves, and susceptible of much poetical embellishment.

"Such are the liberties which the author has taken with the story. A more sparing use of the *potestas quidlibet audendi* might have been adviseable on a scriptural subject. Readers influenced by a due respect for scripture, do not well endure a violent disturbance of its order. In that case something more than criticism is offended. He makes, however, all the atonement that can be expected from a poet: in his fictions he discovers much warmth of conception, and his numbers are very harmonious. His numbers, indeed, imitate pretty closely those of Pope, and therefore cannot fail to be musical; but he is chiefly to be commended for the animation with which he writes, and which rather increases as he proceeds, than suffers any abatement. His seventh book, in which he describes with great spirit the horrors of a battle fought by the light of a city in flames, affords one proof of it; and his tenth book, which is the

last but one, another. Here an angel reveals to Joshua, in vision, the future destiny of his nation, and the poet takes his course through all the great events of prophecy, beginning with the settlement of the chosen race in Canaan, and closing with the consummation of all things. A strain of fine enthusiasm runs through the whole book; and we will venture to affirm, that no man who has a soul, impressible by a bright display of the grandest subjects that revelation furnishes, will read it without some emotion.

"The composition, however, is not without a fault; and as we have candidly praised, we will censure with fidelity. By the motto[13] which the author has chosen, we are led to suspect that he is young, and the chief blemish of his poem is one into which hardly any thing but youth could have betrayed him. A little mature consideration would have taught him, that a subject nearly four thousand years old could not afford him a very fair opportunity for the celebration of his contemporaries. We found our attention to the wars of Joshua not pleasantly interrupted by a tribute of respect paid to the memory of a Mr. Wooster, slain on Ridgfield Hills, in America; of a Mr. Warren, who fell in battle at Charlestown; and of a Mr. Mercer, who shared a similar fate at Princeton. He would plead, perhaps, his patriotism for his apology; but it is best to admit nothing that needs one.

"With respect to the language, it is often forcible, and in general elegant. A few instances occur in which it is liable to reprehension, and we esteem it an essential part of our duty as reviewers to notice them.

Book I. v. 214:—

'Sooth his rack'd nerves, and *learn* them not to feel.'

Book II. v. 362:—

'And *learn* his rending sinews not to feel.'

Here the sense of the verb *teach* is given to the verb *learn*,—a mistake not unfrequent in the carelessness of common discourse, yet hardly pardonable even there.

[13] Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In *fearless youth* we 'tempt the height of arts. POPE.

Book v. v. 419:—

'The morning *shined*.'

Book v. v. 424:—

'Round his aspect *shone*.'

The verb *shine* cannot have a double imperfect, cannot make both *shined* and *shone*. The latter is right; consequently the former wrong.

'Book v. v. 717:—

'For ah! on Irad all my joys *suspend*.'
instead of . . . . . *depend*.

Book ix. v. 415:—

'On the sweet maid his eye *all-wished* hung.'

If *all-wished* be not a press error, it is Transatlantic English; but perhaps the author wrote *all-wistful*.

"We shall now proceed to a more agreeable part of our business, and give extracts from the poem, rather with a view to exhibit the compass of the author's powers, than, by an anxious selection of striking passages, to prejudice our readers in its favour.

"The following lines contain a beautiful description of a maiden going forth to meet her victorious lover on his return from battle:—

'The sun declined; besmear'd with dust and blood,
Slow o'er the plain the wearied squadrons trode;
When, fair as Phosphor leads the morning train,
Dress'd in new beams and beauteous from the main;
Crown'd with white flowers, that breathed a rich perfume,
And clothed in loveliness of gayest bloom,
Rose in soft splendour Caleb's youngest pride,
A thousand maidens following at her side;
In snow-white robes of flowing silk array'd,
First of the virgins walk'd the blushing maid,
Her long dark hair loose floated in the wind;
Her glowing eyes confess'd the ethereal mind;
A wreath of olive flourish'd in her hand,
A silver lyre obey'd her soft command;

With sounds harmonious rang the warbled strings,
And thus the maids, and thus Selima sings.
" Who comes from Ai, adorn'd with gay attire,
Bright as the splendour of the morning fire?
Fair as the spring ascends the lovely form,
And dreadful as the blaze that lights the storm.
Ye maids, with flow'rets strew the conqueror's way,
Strike the loud harp, and sing the dreadful day!"
To Irad's steps the matchless fair one came,
Her breast quick panting, and her cheeks on flame;
Her beauteous hand the verdant crown display'd;
Graceful he bow'd, and placed it on his head.
Slow to her train the trembling fair withdrew,
The charm'd youths following with a moveless view:
So wing'd with light, and dress'd in strange array,
The mantling glory of the rising day,
With sweet complacence, such as angels show
To souls unprison'd from this world of woe,
Parted soft-smiling from our general sire,
Some bright-eyed virtue, of the heavenly quire;
Far in the solar walk, with wondrous flight,
The form celestial lessen'd on his sight.'

" The following description of Night is highly poetical:—

' Now Night, in vestments robed of cloudy dye,
With sable grandeur clothed the orient sky,
Impell'd the sun obsequious to her reign,
Down the far mountains to the western main;
With magic hand becalm'd the solemn even,
And drew day's curtain from the spangled heaven.
At once the planets sail'd around her throne;
At once ten thousand worlds in splendour shone;
Behind her car, the moon's expanded eye
Rose from a cloud, and look'd around the sky:
Far up the' immense her train sublimely roll,
And dance, and triumph, round the lucid pole.
Faint shine the fields beneath the shadowy ray,
Slow fades the glimmering of the west away;
To sleep the tribes retire; and not a sound
Flows through the air, or murmurs on the ground.'

Such also is this of an army descending from the mountains, and the line in particular, which we have marked with Italics, is exquisitely imagined:—

'He spoke: a shout convulsed the mountain's brow,
And burst sonorous o'er the world below:
Each warrior on the plain in fancy stood,
Drove back whole hosts, and ruled the scenes of blood;
Each on his falchion cast a frequent eye,
And thought it bliss in Israel's cause to die.
As sullen clouds, when blasts in silence rest,
Hang black and heavy on the mountain's breast;
Slow sink the volumes down its hoary side,
Shroud all the cliffs, and roll in gloomy pride;
At once the winds arise, and sounding rain
Pours with impetuous fury o'er the plain:
So the dark hosts descend in deep array,
And o'er the champaign drive their dreadful way.'

These extracts we shall conclude with a short one, in which the poet gives an air of novelty to an object not new by his manner of dressing it:—

'Full well the monarch knew that fears began,
From breast to breast, like glancing lightnings, ran;
That one rank fled instructs a host to fly,
And cowards' eyes teach heroes' hearts to die.'"

The remaining article is upon Darwin's Loves of the Plants. After giving an account of the frontispiece and other preliminaries, the critic proceeds thus:—

"The poem consists of four cantos, and the three first are followed each by a dialogue between the poet and the bookseller, which the author calls an interlude. Much critical knowledge is conveyed, and much philosophical too, in these dialogues; but it is impossible not to observe how very inferior a part is assigned in them to the bookseller, whose short questions serve merely as a trigger to shoot off the poet's charge of deep and abstruse intelligence. They remind us of a fable which we got by heart in our infancy, and which therefore we still remember. A certain carver exhibited the figures of a man and a lion, the lion under the foot of the man. It chanced that

a lion passing that way observed them, and being naturally offended at the man's partiality to his own kind, told him with some asperity, that the man should have been undermost had a lion been the carver. We doubt not but booksellers may be found who will know how to make the application.

"The poetry itself is of a very superior cast; and whether we consider the author's management of his subject, his delicacy of expression, or the sweetness of his numbers, we feel ourselves equally called upon to commend him. He introduces his various objects of description (for they follow in long succession) with so much versatility of genius, that we could not but admire the grace and ease, and the playfulness of fancy with which he conducts himself through this part of his business, perhaps the most difficult of all. His descriptions themselves are luminous as language selected with the finest taste can make them, and meet the eye with a boldness of projection unattainable by any hand but that of a master. Neither is this all the praise that belongs to him. Though botany so abounds with marvellous realities that the embellishments of fiction might, on such a subject, seem almost superfluous, yet he has greatly enhanced the beauty of his poem by a continued series of fictions. All his flowers undergo a change, not a simple one, but each into as many persons, male and female, as there are symptoms of either sex in their formation: for it is on their sexuality that he has built his poem. Reversing the Metamorphoses of Ovid, who transformed persons, human and divine, into trees and flowers, he calls them, (as he says in his proem,) from their vegetable mansions to their original animality again. He endues them with human passions and propensities; they manifest all the variety of feelings to which amorous inclination subjects its votaries, but always with a strict attention on the poet's part to the discoveries which philosophy has made among them. At the same time, according as the name, the properties, or the history of the several plants suggested the opportunity, he has diversified his plan, either by elegant fancies of his own, by allusions to ancient mythology or scripture narrative, or occasionally to legendary tales concerning them.

"In short, if the study of botany can be more powerfully recommended than it is by the delight that belongs to it, it must be by the pen of such a writer."

Six pages of extracts follow from the poem and the notes. Cowper remarks on these passages, that "the personification of Ague is singularly terrific, and a proof of a strong romantic imagination:" that all who have suffered under the incubations of the Night Mare will taste the passage relating to it: that the author has shown "how much genius a true poet can display on a subject seemingly so poor as a Double Daisy;" and that "there is a beauty in that expression, '*the eye-tipt horns* of the snail,' which an ordinary writer would not have attained in half a dozen laboured couplets."

Thanks for the mention of Mr. Twining's book, vol. vi. p. 227.—A translation of Aristotle's Poetics. The Rev. Thomas Twining was born in 1734, graduated at Sidney College, Cambridge, in 1763, and died in 1804. Professor Martyn, his contemporary and fellow collegian, says of him, "he had a most exquisite taste, both classical and musical; he was a profound Greek, and was a man of the truest best-natured humour that I ever met with. His brother, the late Mr. Richard Twining, was once engaged in preparing for publication the Remains and Correspondence of his literary relative; but the design was interrupted by his death, and has not been prosecuted by others." See Gorham's Life of Professor Martyn, where there is a curious instance of Twining's humour, in a description of the College *Apple-roaster*, after the manner of Linnæus, written to ridicule the barbarisms of what he esteemed a mongrel phraseology. A beautifully executed and striking mezzotinto portrait of Twining was engraved, for his family and friends, but (it is believed) was not published.

Two odes of Horace lately discovered at Rome, vol. vi. p. 282.—One of these odes may be seen in the Gentleman's Magazine for October, 1835,—where I learn that they were said to be discovered in the Palatine library, and communicated by Gaspar Pallavicini, the sub-librarian;—that they are clumsy forgeries, and that there is a false quantity in each.

His great botanical work, vol. vi. p. 313.—"A new edition of Miller's 'Gardener's Dictionary,' or rather an entirely new work, founded on Miller's as its basis, embodying all information

of importance for the Botanist, the Gardener, and the Husbandman, which existed at the close of the eighteenth century." This work gave Professor Martyn incessant occupation for two and twenty years. This Herculean and *unassisted* task was commenced in 1785, and the work was published in 1807, in four very large folio volumes. The Professor computed that he had written not fewer than twenty thousand sheets of paper in the compilation of it.—G. C. G.

Mr. Park, vol. vii. p. 90.—This excellent person, whose knowledge of English bibliography, and English poetry in particular, has never been surpassed, died in 1834, at the age of seventy-five. I have more to say of one for whose memory I entertain a very high respect than there is room for here. This brief notice therefore must suffice for introducing Cowper's letters to him, as printed in the Monthly Mirror. That they were not inserted in the Correspondence was owing to an oversight occasioned by the Editor's distance from the press.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, Feb. 19, 1792.

Yesterday evening your parcel came safe to hand, containing the "Cursory Remarks," "Fletcher's Faithful Shepperdesse," and your kind letter, for all which I am much obliged to you.

Every thing that relates to Milton must be welcome to an editor of him; and I am so unconnected with the learned world that, unless assistance seeks *me*, I am not very likely to find it. Fletcher's work was not in my possession; nor, indeed, was I possessed of any other, when I engaged in this undertaking, that could serve me much in the performance of it. The various untoward incidents of a very singular life have deprived me of a valuable collection, partly inherited from my father, partly from my brother, and partly made by myself; so that I have at present fewer books than any man ought to have who writes for the public, especially who assumes the character of an editor. At the present moment, however, I find myself tolerably well provided for this occasion by the kindness of a few friends, who have not been backward to pick from their

shelves every thing that they thought might be useful to me. I am happy to be able to number you among these friendly contributors.

You will add a considerable obligation to those you have already conferred, if you will be so good as to furnish me with such notices of your own as you offer. Parallel passages, or, at least, a striking similarity of expression, is always worthy of remark; and I shall reprint, I believe, all Mr. Warton's notes of that kind, except such as are rather trivial, and some, perhaps, that are a little whimsical, and except that I shall diminish the number of his references, which are not seldom redundant. Where a word only is in question, and that, perhaps, not an uncommon one in the days of Milton, his use of it proves little or nothing; for it is possible that authors writing on similar subjects may use the same words by mere accident. Borrowing seems to imply poverty, and of poverty I can rather suspect any man than Milton. But I have as yet determined nothing absolutely concerning the mode of my commentary, having hitherto been altogether busied in the translation of his Latin poems. These I have finished, and shall immediately proceed to a version of the Italian. They, being few, will not detain me long; and, when they are done, will leave me at full liberty to deliberate on the main business, and to plan and methodize my operations.

I shall be always happy in, and account myself honoured by, your communications, and hope that our correspondence thus begun will not terminate *in limine primo*.

I am, dear sir, with much respect,
Your most obliged humble servant,
WM. COWPER.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, March 10, 1792.

You will have more candour, as I hope and believe, than to impute my delay to answer your kind and friendly letter to inattention or want of a cordial respect for the writer of it. To suppose any such cause of my silence were injustice both to yourself and me. The truth is, I am a very busy man, and cannot gratify myself with writing to my friends so punctually as I wish.

You have not in the least fallen in my esteem on account of your employment, as you seemed to apprehend that you might. It is an elegant one, and, when you speak modestly, as you do, of your proficiency in it, I am far from giving you entire credit for the whole assertion. I had indeed supposed you a person of independent fortune, who had nothing to do but to gratify himself; and whose mind, being happily addicted to literature, was at full leisure to enjoy its innocent amusement. But it seems I was mistaken, and your time is principally due to an art which has a right pretty much to engross your attention, and which gives rather the air of an intrigue to your intercourse and familiarity with the Muses than a lawful connexion. No matter: I am not prudish in this respect, but honour you the more for a passion, virtuous and laudable in itself; and which you indulge not, I dare say, without benefit both to yourself and your acquaintance. I, for one, am likely to reap the fruit of your amours, and ought, therefore, to be one of the last to quarrel with them.

You are in danger, I perceive, of thinking of me more highly than you ought to think. I am not one of the *literati*, among whom you seem disposed to place me. Far from it. I told you in my last how heinously I am unprovided with the means of being so, having long since sent all my books to market. My learning accordingly lies in a very narrow compass. It is school-boy learning somewhat improved, and very little more. From the age of twenty to twenty-three, I was occupied, or ought to have been, in the study of the law. From thirty-three to sixty I have spent my time in the country, where my reading has been only an apology for idleness, and where, when I had not either a magazine or a review in my hand, I was sometimes a carpenter, at others a bird-cage maker, or a gardener, or drawer of landscapes. At fifty years of age I commenced an author. It is a whim that has served me longest and best, and which will probably be my last.

Thus you see I have had very little opportunity to become what is properly called—*learned*. In truth, having given myself so entirely of late to poetry, I am not sorry for this deficiency, since great learning, I have been sometimes inclined to suspect, is rather a hinderance to the fancy than a furtherance.

You will do me a favour by sending me a copy of Thomson's monumental inscription. He was a poet for whose memory,

as you justly suppose, I have great respect; in common, indeed, with all who ever read him with taste and attention.

Wishing you heartily success in your present literary undertaking[14], and in all professional ones, I remain,

Dear sir, with great esteem, sincerely yours,

WM. COWPER.

P. S. After what I have said, I will not blush to confess, that I am at present perfectly unacquainted with the merits of Drummond, but shall be happy to see him in due time, as I should be to see any author edited by *you*.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, March 30, 1792.

If you have indeed so favourable an opinion of my judgement as you profess, which I shall not allow myself to question, you will think highly and honourably of your poem, for so I think of it. The view you give of the place that you describe is clear and distinct, the sentiments are just, the reflections touching, and the numbers uncommonly harmonious. I give you joy of having been able to produce, at twenty years of age, what would not have disgraced you at a much later period, and, if you choose to print it, have no doubt that it will do you great credit.

You will perceive, however, when you receive your copy again, that I have used all the liberty you gave me. I have proposed many alterations; but you will consider them as only proposed. My lines are by no means obtruded on you, but are ready to give place to any that you should choose to substitute of your own composing. They will serve at least to mark the passages which seem to me susceptible of improvement, and the manner in which I think the change may be made. I have not always—have seldom indeed—given my reasons; but without a reason I have altered nothing, and the decision, as I say, is left with you in the last instance. Time failed me to be particular and explicit always in accounting for my strictures, and I assured myself that you would impute none of them to an arbitrary humour, but all to their true cause—a desire to discharge faithfully the trust committed to me.

I cannot but add, I think it a pity that you, who have evidently such talents for poetry, should be so loudly called

[14] The Poems of Drummond of Hawthornden.

another way, and want leisure to cultivate them; for if such was the bud, what might we not have expected to see in the full-blown flower? Perhaps, however, I am not quite prudent in saying all this to you, whose proper function is not that of a poet; but I say it, trusting to *your* prudence, that you will not suffer it to seduce you.

I have not the edition of Milton's juvenile poems which you mention, but shall be truly glad to see it, and thank you for the offer.

No possible way occurs to me of returning your MS. but by the Wellingborough coach: by that conveyance, therefore, I shall send it on Monday, and my remarks, rough as I made them, shall accompany it.

Believe me, with much sincerity, yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, April 27, 1792.

I write now merely to prevent any suspicion in your mind that I neglect you. I have been very ill, and for more than a fortnight unable to use the pen, or you should have heard long ere now of the safe arrival of your packet. I have revised the Elegy on Seduction, but have not as yet been able to proceed farther. The best way of returning these which I have now in hand, will be to return them with those which you propose to send hereafter. I will make no more apologies for any liberties that it may seem necessary to me to take with your copies. Why do you send them, but that I may exercise that freedom, of which the very act of sending them implies your permission? I will only say, therefore, that you must neither be impatient nor even allow yourself to think me tardy, since assuredly I will not be more so than I needs must be. My hands are pretty full. Milton must be forwarded, and is at present hardly begun; and I have beside a numerous correspondence, which engrosses more of my time than I can at present well afford to it. I cannot decide with myself whether the lines in which the reviewers are so smartly noticed had better be expunged or not. Those lines are gracefully introduced and well written; for which reasons I should be loth to part with them. On the other hand, how far it may be prudent to irritate a body of *critics*, who certainly much influence the public opinion, may

deserve consideration. It may be added too, that they are not all equally worthy of the lash: there are among them men of real learning, judgement, and candour. I must leave it, therefore, to your own determination.

I thank you for Thomson's Epitaph, on which I have only to remark, (and I am sure that I do it not in a captious spirit,) that, since the poet is himself the speaker, I cannot but question a little the propriety of the quotation subjoined. It is a prayer, and when the man is buried, the time of prayer is over. I know it may be answered, that it is placed there merely for the benefit of the reader; but all readers of tombstones are not wise enough to be trusted for such an interpretation.

I was well pleased with your poem on * * * and equally well pleased with your intention not to publish it. It proves two points of consequence to an author:—both that you have an exuberant fancy, and discretion enough to know how to deal with it. The man is as formidable for his ludicrous talent, as he has made himself contemptible by his use of it. To despise him therefore is natural, but it is wise to do it in secret.

Since the juvenile poems of Milton were edited by Warton, you need not trouble yourself to send them. I have them of his edition already.

I am, dear Sir, affectionately yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, July 20, 1792.

I have been long silent, and must now be short. My time since I wrote last has been almost wholly occupied in suffering. Either indisposition of my own, or of the dearest friend I have, has so entirely engaged my attention, that, except the revision of the two elegies you sent me long since, I have done nothing; nor do I at present foresee the day when I shall be able to do any thing. Should Mrs. Unwin recover sufficiently to undertake a journey, I have promised Mr. Hayley to close the summer with a visit to him at Eartham. At the best, therefore, I cannot expect to proceed in my main business, till the approach of winter. I am thus thrown so much into arrear respecting Milton, that I already despair of being ready at the time appointed, and so I have told my employer.

I need not say that the drift of this melancholy preface is to

apprize you that you must not expect dispatch from me. Such expedition as I can use I will, but I believe you must be very patient.

It was only one year that I gave to drawing, for I found it an employment hurtful to my eyes, which have always been weak and subject to inflammation. I finished my attempt in this way with three small landscapes, which I presented to a lady. These may, perhaps, exist, but I have now no correspondence with the fair proprietor. Except these, there is nothing remaining to show that I ever aspired to such an accomplishment.

The hymns in the Olney collection marked (C,) are all of my composition, except one, which bears that initial by a mistake of the printer. Not having the book at hand, I cannot now say which it is.

Wishing you a pleasant time at Margate, and assuring you that I shall receive, with great pleasure, any drawing of yours with which you may favour me, and give it a distinguished place in my very small collection,

I remain, dear Sir,
Much and sincerely yours,
WM. COWPER.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, Dec. 17, 1792.

You are very kind in thinking it worth while to enquire after so irregular a correspondent. When I had read your last, I persuaded myself that I had answered your obliging letter received while I was at Eartham, and seemed clearly to remember it; but, upon better recollection, am inclined to think myself mistaken, and that I have many pardons to ask for neglecting to do it so long.

While I was at Mr. Hayley's I could hardly find opportunity to write to any body. He is an early riser and breakfasts early, and unless I could rise early enough myself to dispatch a letter before breakfast, I had no leisure to do it at all. For immediately after breakfast we repaired to the library, where we studied in concert till noon; and the rest of my time was so occupied by necessary attention to my poor invalid, Mrs. Unwin, and by various other engagements, that to write was impossible.

Since my return, I have been almost constantly afflicted with

weak and inflamed eyes, and indeed have wanted spirits as well as leisure. If you can, therefore, you must pardon me; and you will do it perhaps the rather, when I assure you that not you alone, but every person and every thing that had demands upon me has been equally neglected. A strange weariness that has long had dominion over me has indisposed and indeed disqualified me for all employment; and my hinderances besides have been such that I am sadly in arrear in all quarters. A thousand times I have been sorry and ashamed that your MSS. are yet unrevised, and if you knew the compunction that it has cost me, you would pity me: for I feel as if I were guilty in that particular, though my conscience tells me that it could not be otherwise.

Before I received your letter written from Margate, I had formed a resolution never to be engraven, and was confirmed in it by my friend Hayley's example. But, learning since, though I have not learned it from himself, that my bookseller has an intention to prefix a copy of Abbott's picture of me to the next edition of my poems, at his own expense, if I can be prevailed upon to consent to it; in consideration of the liberality of his behaviour, I have felt my determination shaken. This intelligence, however, comes to me from a third person, and till it reaches me in a direct line from Johnson, I can say nothing to *him* about it. When he shall open to me his intentions himself, I will not be backward to mention to him your obliging offer, and shall be particularly gratified, if I must be engraved at last, to have that service performed for me by a friend.

I thank you for the anecdote, which could not fail to be very pleasant, and remain, my dear Sir,

With gratitude and affection, yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Weston Underwood, Jan. 3, 1795.

A few lines must serve to introduce to you my much-valued friend Mr. Rose, and to thank you for your very obliging attention in sending me so approved a remedy for my disorder. It is no fault of yours, but it will be a disappointment to you to know, that I have long been in possession of that remedy, and

have tried it without effect, or to speak more truly, with an unfavourable one. Judging by the pain it causes, I conclude that it is of the caustic kind, and may therefore be sovereign in cases where the eyelids are ulcerated; but mine is a dry inflammation, which it has always increased as often as I have used it. I used it again, after having long since resolved to use it no more, that I might not seem, even to myself, to slight your kindness, but with no better effect than in every former instance.

You are very candid in crediting so readily the excuse I make for not having yet revised your MSS. and as kind in allowing me still longer time. I refer you for a more particular account of the circumstances that make all literary pursuits at present impracticable to me, to the young gentleman who delivers this into your hands. He is perfectly master of the subject, having just left me after having spent a fortnight with us.

You asked me a long time since a question concerning the Olney Hymns, which I do not remember that I have ever answered. Those marked C, are mine, one excepted, which, though it bears that mark, was written by Mr. Newton. I have not the collection at present, and therefore cannot tell you which it is.

You must extend your charity still a little farther, and excuse a short answer to your two obliging letters. I do every thing with my pen in a hurry, but will not conclude without entreating you to make my thanks and best compliments to the lady who was so good as to trouble herself for my sake to write a character of the medicine. I remain,

My dear Sir,

Sincerely yours,

WM. COWPER.

Your request does me honour. Johnson will have orders in a few days to send you a copy of the edition just published.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, May 17, 1793.

It has not been without frequent self-reproach that I have so long omitted to answer your last very kind and most obliging letter. I am by habit and inclination extremely punctual in the discharge of such arrears, and it is only through necessity, and

under constraint of various indispensable engagements of a different kind, that I am become of late much otherwise.

I have never seen Chapman's translation of Homer, and will not refuse your offer of it, unless, by accepting it, I shall deprive you of a curiosity that you cannot easily replace. The line or two which you quote from him, except that the expression "a well-written soul" has the quaintness of his times in it, do him credit. He cannot surely be the same Chapman who wrote a poem, I think, on the battle of Hochstadt, in which, when I was a very young man, I remember to have seen the following lines:

"Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,
And each man mounted on his capering beast.
Into the Danube they were push'd by shoals,
And sunk and bobb'd, and bobb'd and sunk, and sunk and bobb'd
their souls!"

These are lines that could not fail to impress the memory, though not altogether in the Homerican style of battle.

I am, as you say, a hermit, and probably an irreclaimable one, having a horror of London that I cannot express, nor indeed very easily account for. Neither am I much less disinclined to migration in general. I did no little violence to my love of home last summer, when I paid Mr. Hayley a visit, and in truth was principally induced to the journey, by a hope that it might be useful to Mrs. Unwin; who, however, derived so little benefit from it, that I purpose for the future to avail myself of the privilege my years may reasonably claim, by compelling my younger friends to visit *me*. But even this is a point which I cannot well compass at present, both because I am too busy, and because poor Mrs. Unwin is not able to bear the fatigue of company. Should better days arrive, days of more leisure to me, and of some health to her, I shall not fail to give you notice of the change, and shall then hope for the pleasure of seeing you at Weston.

The epitaph you saw is on the tomb of the same Mr. Unwin to whom the "Tirocinium" is inscribed; the son of the lady above mentioned. By the desire of his executors I wrote a Latin one, which they approved, but it was not approved by a relation of the deceased, and therefore was not used. He ob-

jected to the mention I had made in it of his mother having devoted him to the service of God in his infancy. She did it, however, and not in vain, as I wrote in my epitaph. Who wrote the English one I know not.

The poem called "The Slave" is not mine, nor have I ever seen it. I wrote two on the subject—one entitled "The Negro's Complaint," and the other "The Morning Dream." With thanks for all your kindness, and the patience you have with me,

I remain, dear sir, sincerely yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THOMAS PARK, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, W. U. July 15, 1793.

Within these few days I have received, by favour of Miss Knapps, your acceptable present of Chapman's translation of the Iliad. I know not whether the book be a rarity, but a curiosity it certainly is. I have as yet seen but little of it, enough however to make me wonder that any man, with so little taste for Homer, or apprehension of his manner, should think it worth while to undertake the laborious task of translating him; the hope of pecuniary advantage may perhaps account for it. His information, I fear, was not much better than his verse, for I have consulted him in one passage of some difficulty, and find him giving a sense of his own, not at all warranted by the words of Homer. Pope sometimes does this, and sometimes omits the difficult part entirely. I can boast of having done neither, though it has cost me infinite pains to exempt myself from the necessity.

I have seen a translation by Hobbes, which I prefer for its greater clumsiness. Many years have passed since I saw it, but it made me laugh immoderately. Poetry that is not good can only make amends for that deficiency by being ridiculous; and, because the translation of Hobbes has at least this recommendation, I shall be obliged to you, should it happen to fall in your way, if you would be so kind as to procure it for me. The only edition of it I ever saw (and perhaps there never was another,) was a very thick 12mo., both print and paper bad, a sort of book that would be sought in vain, perhaps, anywhere but on a stall.

When you saw Lady Hesketh, you saw the relation of mine with whom I have been more intimate, even from childhood, than any other. She has seen much of the world, understands it well, and, having great natural vivacity, is of course one of the most agreeable companions.

I have now arrived almost at a close of my labours on the Iliad, and have left nothing behind me, I believe, which I shall wish to alter on any future occasion. In about a fortnight or three weeks I shall begin to do the same for the Odyssey, and hope to be able to perform it while the Iliad is in printing. Then Milton will demand all my attention, and when I shall find opportunity either to revise your MSS. or to write a poem of my own, which I have in contemplation, I can hardly say. Certainly not till both these tasks are accomplished.

I remain, dear sir,
With many thanks for your kind present,
Sincerely yours,
WM. COWPER.

Thomas Hayley, vol. vii. p. 192.—"This letter," says Hayley, "may be regarded as a remarkable proof of the great poet's indulgent sweetness of temper, in favouring the literary talents of a child. A good-natured reader will hardly blame the parental partiality to a dear departed scholar, which induces me to insert the letter Cowper answered so kindly—a letter, that readers accustomed to contemplate the compositions of childhood may consider, perhaps, as a curiosity, when they are assured, as they are with perfect truth, that every syllable of the letter, and of the criticisms annexed to it, were the voluntary and uncorrected production of a boy, whose age was little more than twelve years."

TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

HONOURED KING OF BARDS, Eartham, March 4, 1793.

Since you deign to demand the observations of an humble and unexperienced servant of yours, on a work of one who is so much his superior (as he is ever ready to serve you with all his might) behold what you demand! but let me desire you not to censure me for my unskilful and perhaps (as they will undoubt-

edly appear to you) ridiculous observations; but be so kind as to receive them as a mark of respectful affection from

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS HAYLEY.

Book.	Line.	
I. ...	184. 195. 126.	I cannot reconcile myself to these expressions, "Ah, cloth'd with impudence," &c. "Shameless wolf," and "Face of flint."
I. ...	508.	"Dishonour'd foul," is, in my opinion, an uncleanly expression.
I. ...	651.	"Reel'd," I think makes it appear as if Olympus was drunk.
I. ...	749.	"Kindler of the fires in heaven," I think makes Jupiter appear too much like a lamplighter.
II. ..	317 to 319.	These lines are, in my opinion, below the elevated genius of Mr. Cowper.
XVIII. ...	300 to 304.	This appears to me to be rather Irish, since in line 300 you say, "No one sat," and in 304, "Polydamus rose."

END OF VOL. VII.

CHISWICK:
PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM.